

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

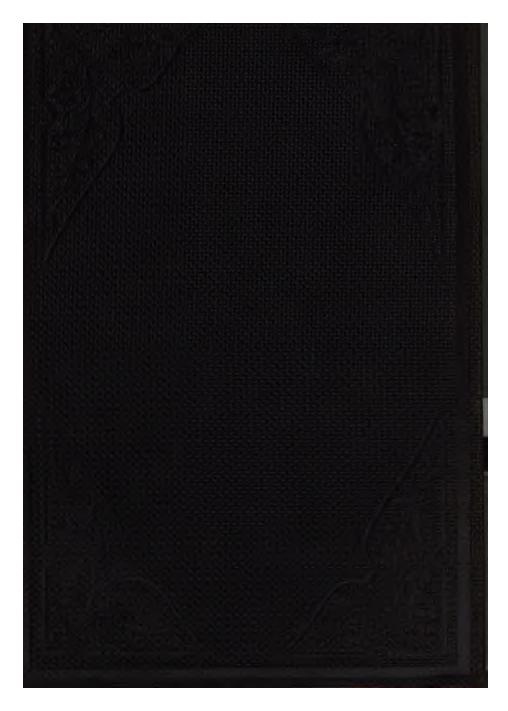
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + Refrain from automated querying Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/





	•		
			•
•			

• .*;

GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER.

ADDRESSED TO THE

SPIRITUALLY POOR.

BY

GEORGE D. DOUDNEY,

INCUMBENT OF CHARLES' CHAPEL, PLYMOUTH; AUTHOR OF "THE BROKEN HEART."

> "CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL." Cor. iii. 11.

FIRST SERIES, IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

W. H. COLLINGRIDGE, CITY PRESS, 1, LONG LANE. PLYMOUTH: W. BRENDON.

1855. 100. 3. 138.



CONTENTS.

•				
				Page
Jesus Only		•		. 1
Gideon				33
THE LOT CAST INTO THE LAP				. 49
The Friend of God				65
Do I live Christ?				. 73
Immanuel's Portrait of his Brid	E		,	145
THE GLORIES OF JESHUBUN				. 185
THE MAN OF SORBOWS				273
Immanuel's Promise to his Bride				. 329
Joy in God				361
THE BRUISED REED .				. 385

			•		
·					
			*	•	
	•	•			
•					
				•	

PREFACE.

Ir the following pages realize the object which has been kept in view during their publication, it will be of little moment what critics of any class may say respecting them. And that in many instances that object has been realized, the testimonies already received abundantly prove; for which the Author desires to record his unfeigned gratitude and praise to the Holy Comforter—the divine Minister in the one church—by whose unction and power alone, the flowings of the doctrine of Christ become spirit and life, from the pen of any man—much more so from that of one, who can make no pretensions beyond this:—that he does not handle the word of God deceitfully, but what he desires to convey by that which he writes, is honestly believed to be in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, and coinciding with "the simplicity that is in Christ," as manifested in the daily experience of His living members.

The Lectures are addressed to the spiritual living children of God:—none but such, will understand them. The Person of Christ, in His preciousness, and the perfection of His suitability to a needy, broken-hearted sinner, forms the one grand subject of the whole. But the object kept in view has been the development of the Spirit's work, and testimony of Jesus, by His ministry in the heart of the child of God; by which Christ is formed in the heart, the hope of glory. As distinguished from a notional or intellectual profession, resting for its base, either on doctrine on the one hand,

or moral practice and religious zeal on the other; knowing assuredly, that all profession that does not arise from true spiritual life cannot be connected with true vital faith, and that "what-soever is not of faith is sin. Arising, moreover, out of the inbeing of this holy and spiritual life in the soul, the daily conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, which forms the chief daily cross of the true believer in Jesus, is largely dwelt upon. This feature probably, has endeared the little book to many of the Lord's deeply tried, and exercised people, as, by the Spirit's leadings, it bears the testimony of Jesus, as the oil and the wine of the covenant, like the good Samaritan did of old, into the very place where each wounded one lies.

Once more, Holy Comforter! as a feeble instrument dedicated to the service of the sanctuary in which thou delightest to minister, permit thy little one to present this first volume in its new form to thee! Pour thou thy holy unction upon its words! Give thou divine power to its breathings! And to the Holy Covenant Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, shall be all the praise.

JESUS ONLY.

No. I.

" For I determined not to known any thing among you same Jesus

ERRATA.

Read the top line page 3 as top line page 2.

Line 18, page 103, read parenthesis thus, [or babe, man is not expressed in the Greek].

Lines 19 and 20, page 211, read "only believe."

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God." Do we desire to follow the Apostle? If like the dear apostle we have a true spiritual knowledge of and intimacy with Christ, we have one eternal object on which our spiritual affections must wholly centre; one eternal subject which shall bring every thought into willing captivity, filling the mind, the heart, the tongue, with eternal wonder! eternal joy! and eternal praise! and that Object, that Subject, is that ever adorable Person—our most glorious Christ.

Paul had been brought by the teaching and ministry of the Spirit, out of and far above all mere religion. His faith, and hope, and love, now rested on A PERSON, which is quite distinct from a knowledge of and belief in creeds, however doctrinally sound they

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LEGIUSEE. No. 1.

after his conversion he became a devoted and faithful lover of a **Person**. There is more importance in this distinction between a Religion based upon creeds, and true spiritual love and worship centring in a **Person**, than at first sight may appear. We pray the Lord the Spirit to open the truth, as it is thus in Jesus, more fully to the minds of the exercised family whom God hath chosen in the furnace of affliction.

From the general contents of this chapter it is clear Paul knew that his spiritual testimonies respecting Christ would be rejected by those who were not partakers of divine life, who were not born again from above, whom he calls, ver. 14, "natural men," and he expressly declares that the natural man rejects really spiritual things, because it is impossible he can understand them—" they are foolishness to him." Now this cannot refer to systems of Theology and religious creeds, for they, in all their various shades of difference, have their believers and their defenders: no, it is something beyond and above all these; it is something which has to do with the heart'as well as the head; it is something that is held in the affections as well as in the judgment; it is something that melts a hard heart, inflames a cold heart, subdues a proud heart, tames a wild heart, enobles a grovelling heart, strengthens a fainting heart, and makes valiant a fearful heart. Now systems cannot do this. It must be LOVE fixed upon A PERSON.

A natural man must necessarily proceed in religious matters precisely as he does in all other important affairs in life, he reasons, and if a prudent person, forms his conclusions and regulates his conduct according to those rules which, in his judgment, have most of truth in them, and promise the greatest possible amount of happiness, with the least possible risk of failure. This is all quite right in things natural, but fails wholly when applied to things spiritual. The natural man will dispute this point, and in the very face of Paul's declaration in this chapter, he will treat as foolishness all that does not coincide with those views which "man's wisdom teacheth." Paul himself evidently thus reasoned after the flesh, until on his memorable journey to Damascus, a Person crossed his path, whose appearance instantly deranged all his reasonings, brought him into the dust, crying, "Who art thou, Lord?" No longer now full of this world's wisdom, but vanquished and brought down into the condition of a little child, behold him, trembling and astonished, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Paul now began to learn what true worship consisted of. He

may be. Before his conversion Paul was a highly religious man, now began to understand how to distinguish between the mere letter of God's word and the power of the Spirit, by which that word, as a living word, is demonstrated in the heart (1 Cor. ii. 4), proved to be, what it professes to be; "For the word of God is quick [that is a living word, a life-giving word] and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow [a separating word indeed], and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). Up to this point in Paul's experience his head had been the seat of his worship, his natural judgment his guide; but henceforth this *Person*, who had thus so unexpectedly taken possession of his heart, must become the centre of all his thoughts, and all his affections—the spring of all his actions—he arises out of himself into a new creature, into a new life. All his tendencies, views, and wishes are changed. A new power of attraction totally beyond the controll of his reason now influences He is no longer master of his own heart. He no longer lives for himself, nor to himself, but for the sake of and to the praise of another.

Moreover, as Paul was led on, and grew in grace, and in his knowledge of Jesus, all time-things, time-troubles, and time-glories became as the small dust of the balance in his esteem. He learned what Moses had been instructed into in the same school. "To esteem the expression of Christ, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt:" (Heb. xi. 26). How much more then, when by faith he gazed upon "the King in his beauty," and beheld the glory of the Person of Christ, realizing his own personal interest in all that Christ is and has, how much more then, thus attracted by his splendours, must he "triumph in Christ."

With the heart's affections thus gathered up into communion and fellowship with Christ, and with God our covenant Father in Christ, the child of God can look down upon passing tribulations, and sing, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look, not at the things which are seen [according to the dictates of reason and prudence], but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Cor. iv. 17)." Or as Paul expresses the same realization by faith, of the Person of Christ, with regard to Moses (Heb. xi. 27), "For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

But now, here is the main point for us to come at, if we would understand Paul. A Person, and not systems and creeds, must be the grand centre on which all turns, towards which every line converges, and love to that Person, the secret motive which runs through all. Man's wisdom may conduct him as far as systems and creeds can go, but let true love to the person of Christ once obtain the command of the affections, mere reason and prudence, and all that the pride of man glories in, loses its empire, and henceforth Paul's determination expresses the ruling passion of the soul, "I am determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." It was the love of Christ constraining him that compelled him thus to come to the Corinthians with "Jesus only" on his lips and in his heart.

It may not be unprofitable to make a few plain observations on the same process as that we have seen worked out in Paul spiritually, traceable in the natural relations of life, where true love has established its empire. It will be conceded by most—indeed by all who know any thing of its power and sweetness—that true love is arbitrary, that it asserts a dominion above reason—not, however, necessarily contrary to it.

A young but prudent man is seeking for a suitable wife. An ideal standard is set up in his mind which is applied to the various objects which are presented in his search; all proceeds with philosophic coolness and precise propriety while the heart is at liberty. But suddenly the affections are attracted, the heart becomes entangled by some one all-absorbing object. Thence forward the image of a person, like the soft moon-beams floating on the surface of troubled waters, is ever present, rising above all other objects or subjects, and during his waking hours, at least, occupying the chief place in all his thoughts. Reason may step in and urge objections, disparities, and a thousand things, which if the heart were free would determine the will: but now the only voice which is permitted to be heard continually responds to all opposition, "Get her me, she pleaseth me well." A Person has taken possession of the heart! But what if the object is infinitely above and beyond the standard, how then will all things tend to give wings to the heart, that it may be ever dwelling with delight upon the hope set before it!

Nevertheless, true love, as in the case of Moses, esteeming the reproach of Christ above the riches of Egypt, does not look at the condition of the person, but at the person itself.

Take that little sable babe from the bosom of its African slave-mother, dress it in all the embroidery of a princess, surround it with all the gay attendants of a court. Why does the little one sob, and refuse to be happy? Love is working in its heart. The heart is yearning after a person in whom that love is centred. Place it once more in the arms of its despised mother. What if she is in a miserable den with the manacles of slavery galling her wrists! The little one has found more than a palace. She has found her paradise again in the embraces of that abject outcast one.

The person, and not the condition and circumstances in which that person is placed, is the object of love. Even the reproach of Christ, because it is connected with his adorable Person, is greater

riches than the treasures of Egypt.

It is, moreover, his Person that gives value to his gifts. To love his gifts is one thing, to love his Person, and therefore his gifts, altogether another matter. You have a jewel, you highly prize it, because it is of great value. I have a minature; it is the picture of a person most dear to me. I love it because I see the face of a beloved person smiling upon me in that image. I read in those eyes the love of his heart. I remember as I look upon those lips, the words of tenderness they have spoken. The world looks at your jewel, admires it, praises it for its value, envies you the possession of so rare a jewel, and you are pleased and proud that it is your own property. The world looks at my cherished miniature, compares it with your jewel, treats it with scorn if placed in competition. Why? The person whose image they behold, does not hold their affections in captivity. They may admire him, they may speak highly of his character; but love does not impel them to turn with indifference from your jewel, to gaze upon and drink in a thousand pleasures in contemplating the Person who has become more than ten thousand worlds to me. No; the jewel has intrinsic value in itself; my miniature is only a painted thing, in itself of no value. Thus judges the natural man of things spiritual, where there is no love to the Person of Christ. Heaven may be looked forward to as a paradise of enjoyments; but merely so, because by attaining that goodly land a place of torment will be escaped, and a land of pleasures found instead thereof.

But Paul had not so learned Christ. You never hear Paul singing,

[&]quot;Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood, Stand dressed in living green."

"Could I but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er;
Not Jordan's streams, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright me from the shore."

No; but rather, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). The Person of Christ; the presence of Christ; communion with Christ; putting on Christ; walking in Christ; being complete in Christ; sitting under the shadow of Christ. "With open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of Christ; and being changed into the same image from glory to glory; even as by the Spirit of the Lord." These were Paul's delights; and the more we know of the Person of Christ, and forget ourselves in the knowledge of Him, the more shall we delight in Paul's determination, and know nothing among men, "save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

There is something of the utmost importance in understanding this distinction, and ever keeping it before the mind. Listen to Paul's most emphatic words (Gal. v. 6), "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision [creeds alone, systems alone; yea, and faith alone, are nothing]; but faith which worketh by LOVE." Yes, that faith only which has love for its centre, while Christ alone is the Centre of that love. Let it be repeated again and again; true love cannot exist without a person for its object. On the other hand, a faith may and does largely exist where there is no love—not, however, the faith of God's elect yet it availeth nothing. Hear again the verdict of the Apostle on all intellectual faith: "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love the word charity is not a fair interpretation, according to the present general acceptation of the word], I am nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 2). It is a solemn verdict! How much of the tinselled profession of our day, full as it is of outward zeal, does Paul herein declare to be a thing of naught?

Listen to the Apostle again, and inquire was it for new-found creeds or systems he thus pours contempt on all that had previously engrossed his mind and his soul? No. It is a Person; the glories of a Person; the excellency of a Person upon which his love is now fixed; and his faith working by love, led out his whole heart, soul, thought, and affections, in unutterable contemplations on the blessedness of winning such a prize; being found in such a Righteousness;

pressing after such a high calling; having part in such a Resurrection. Love caused his bosom to burn with desires which nothing short of Christ could satisfy; and faith, working by that love, laid hold of the hope set before him, and enabled him thus to triumph in Jesus only. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things [all time things, which hinder growth in grace] but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. iii. 7, 8).

We must here pause a moment, and glance at a volume of blessedness in confirmation of what we have already said respecting Paul's love, as it was fixed upon the Person of Christ. It is contained in that little word "my," "My Lord!" This constituted a main branch in the excellency of Paul's knowledge. True love cannot be satisfied without personal appropriation. It may be an excellent thing to know that which is most precious, and most lovely, and Christ is declared to be "altogether lovely." But true love stretches far beyond the utmost bounds of mere knowledge. Indeed, the most exquisite torment conceivable, is that which would arise from being cast out and hated by one who possesses entire dominion in the heart; who, being fully known as the "altogether lovely," and ardently beloved as such, yet spurns from His presence, the heart that adores Him. This torment, even while hope was working and impelling her to call mightily on the Lord, though held in suspense, caused the Church to cry out, as in Solomon's Song (chap. viii. 6), "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." Hell itself, with all its torments, could not be so fearful to a child of God. who has his heart fixed in all the fulness of spiritual affection upon the Person of Christ, as eternal banishment from his Divine presence. But Paul not only knew the excellency of Christ's Person, but had been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13), by which he had an ever-present "witness" that he was a child of God, a "joint-heir with Christ" (Rom. viii. 16); therefore it was his delight to put in his claim, to rejoice in his portion, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge that Christ Jesus was his own Lord and Saviour. Christ had won his heart, eternally captivated his spiritual affections, and therefore the unceasing outgoings and up-goings of his soul ever afterwards were expressed in those words, full of the fire of Divine love-" That I may win Christ, and be found in Him! * * This ONE THING I do Thow many of us can adopt Paul's language as our own? \forgetting the things which are behind [sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil], I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 8-14). What is the mark? The excellency of the knowledge that He is My Lord, in the precious abiding confidence of the same. What is the prize? The Person of our most glorious Christ. And what the high calling? "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." But Paul had this confidence, this excellent knowledge; yes, and yet he was ever pressing forward with vehement desire, as though he had not attained to it: as true love, not because it doubts the fervour of the return it meets in the object beloved, but because it delights in being loved, is ever seeking for renewed testimonies of tender affection. This is peculiarly seen in the little child—and he who is most like that little one, is most like Christ. In the fulness of its tender little heart it casts its arms about its mother's neck, and says, "Love me, mother." Why? Does it doubt its mother's love? No; but true love feeds upon the returns it fetches home from the affections of the person beloved. So Paul was ever pressing after renewed knowledge, in precious communion in and through the Person of Christ.

Mark him once more soaring to the highest point of blessedness, in knowing nothing among men but the Person of Christ: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Glorious mystery! A poor, brokenhearted sinner, filled with all the fulness of God! Such is love; such is Christ; such is the foundation of all true spiritual worship.

In our next lecture, we propose to add a few further remarks on what it is to know Christ; and then to point out the necessity of some degree of knowledge of the Person of Christ, in his glory, exaltation, and suitability, before we can enter at all fully into the blessedness of Christ crucified. His grace be with you all. Amen.

JESUS ONLY.

No. 2.

"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ; and him crucified."—1 Cor. ii. 2.

Who shall estimate the excellency of that knowledge, by which a poor, worthless sinner, is brought up out of all that he is in his own guilt and misery, and caused to sit down under the shadow of the Almighty; and there with the eye of that precious faith which worketh by love fixed upon Jesus only—like Mary of old, who chose that good part—and with the heart filled with delight, freely to venture to call Him, "My Lord, and my God!" My Brother!

My Husband! My Friend!

Reason may, yea, must, object to the bold claim, and point to the disparity of the parties: yea, perhaps pronounce it presumption, to speak so freely of such relationships; but still, love and faith working together with such excellent knowledge, will overcome all opposition, and while the dear Comforter is "bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," the claim must be put in, and the boundless mercy rejoiced in, that He is my Lord. And we add, let the eye of faith and love once become fixed on the excellency, glory, and divine beauty of Christ; the world, the flesh, and the devil, may conspire together to draw away the affections from Christ, or set up an idol in His stead, but it shall prove utterly vaim. The more faith discovers of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the firmer will love cleave to the prize. It must be so, or we must admit that this divine love which is wrought in the renewed heart is less powerful than creature love.

What can be more monstrous than to treat the subject, as though the attracting power of Him, who is the "chiefest among ten thou-THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 2. sand and the altogether lovely," (Song v. 10), is less than that which is every day exercised upon us by those who by nature are dear to us?

It may be inconvenient and annoying to some professors of religion to have this point pressed so closely. It will, however, be found at last, in spite of all objection, that mere natural zeal. which is ever more busy about the vineyards of others, than about one's own (vineyard, Song i. 6), [The Lord make all his dear children, especially jealous upon this point, or mere doctrinal knowledge, revolving in a clear head, but accompanied by a cold unloving heart, will prove a sadly delusive substitute for that faith which worketh by love. I know I shall be charged by many. with constantly harping upon one chord. Be it so, my reply is this: Let a condemned sinner—such as I have been—be brought down into the same low place, and continue there for many months together, even at the very gates of death—in expectation—naturally. and that from the workings of inward distress in the soul; with nothing short of Hell's eternal torments before me, and with the verdict pronounced in the court of conscience, that God's justice in my eternal punishment could not be impeached. And then, let such an one have—as I have had—under the divine anointings of the Holy Spirit, Christ Jesus exhibited to faith, in all the glory of His Person, "Immanuel God with us," as crucified for ME, suffering for MY sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring ME to God (1 Pet. iii. 18). I say let any poor wretch who is "ready to perish" see Jesus thus: If he does not love him-if he does not adore him—if he does not henceforth delight to speak of Him only—If henceforth he does not desire earnestly to live to the praise of that grace which has made him eternally accepted in this Beloved One, I have no sympathies in common with that man. But Paul knew Him thus, and Paul loved Him thus. It was such a glorious sight of Christ, which made John exclaim, (Rev. i. 17), "When I saw Him I fell at his feet as dead." Dead to what? Dead to himself, dead to the world, dead to the law, dead to sin, "Ye are dead," says Paul, "and your life is hid with Christ in God." It is this sight of "Jesus only" that kills the soul under a sense of overwhelming love. Therefore says the Apostle again, If thus dead, and "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth," (Col. iii. 1-4). Now, we venture to affirm, that it was just such a process—only in a ten thousand times enlarged degree—as that which we have described as wrought in ourselves, by which Paul was brought to his conclusion, to "harp upon one chord only," "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

We have used the plain "I" instead of "We," because we write chiefly for the poor, who will better understand who we are writing about, and that our testimony is of that, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands [of faith] have handled, of the word of life" (1 John i. 1).

While, however, we thus delight in this determination of the apostle, we are not to lose sight of the spiritual propriety of it; as though it was the more utterance of a heated enthusiasm. Like another Solomon, Paul—by the position which God in His all-wise providence had assigned him, and by the natural constitution of his faculties—had had every advantage and opportunity of ranging over the whole field of philosophy. He had turned his position to the utmost advantage, and, under the ministry and teaching of the Spirit, he had found Solomen's conclusion stamped upon all that stopped short of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. i. 2). Exactly agreeing with this testimony, he counted all things but loss for the knowledge of Christ.

This knowledge, then, is wholly imcomparable. Let us inquire why. Christ Himself tells us (John xvii. 3), "And this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent;" then if eternal life is wrapped up in the knowledge of Christ, it follows, that the absence of the knowledge involves in it the reverse. Eternal death! How glorious the excellence, how fearful the absence of this knowledge! "But, if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world bath blinded the minds of them which believe not, [having substituted fashionable systems and creeds—in which all that is calculated to stir up the latent enmity of the carnal mind against the truth as it is in Jesus, is carefully concealed for that one only channel of spiritual communication, Faith which worketh by love, lest the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them " (2 Cor. iv. 3).

This knowledge is incomparably excellent, because, bringing sternal life with it, it must be infinite in its properties, therefore

in its very nature eternally satisfying, and if so, it contains in it the source of eternal delight! What now becomes of all time knowledge or circumstances when put in comparison with this? vanity of vanities! But let us not separate this knowledge from the Person of Christ; we cannot have the knowledge without union to Him: as the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine. If to know Him is life eternal, and He is expressly Himself that life, to know Him is to be in Him. Hence the ineffable excel-

lency of this knowledge.

It is not a knowledge by seeing after the flesh, for thousands saw Him thus, yet believed not, and perished in their sins. not a mere historical knowledge, like that on which the prevailing hero-worship of the present day is built. But it is a knowledge by revelation in the heart, as Paul expresses it (Gal. i. 16), "When it pleased God, who called me by His grace, to reveal His Son IN me." It is a knowledge which excites love and trust, and especially it is a knowledge in which we grow, as Peter says, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 18.) The fruits of this growth are manifested by the thoughts being daily more and more brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; the mind and affections being more swallowed up in contemplations of His glorious Person, and the boundless fulness of His grace; which so humbles the soul, and brings it down into the dust of self-abasement, that the cry will be ever forcing itself out of the heart: "Woe is me! for I am undone [utterly so in myself]: because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts" (Isa. vi. 5), or as Job (xlii. 5, 6), "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye [the eye of his spiritual understanding having been enlightened, that he might know what is the hope of his calling (Eph. i. 18) seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." This is the sure daily effect of growth in the knowledge of our precious Lord Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, while this knowledge and the growth in it, has this soul-humbling tendency, yet, since it is infinitely satisfying, it is also most soul-enobling. What motive can so affect the heart as a consciousness of the personal enjoyment of that exalted privilege, eternal union with the Great Creator of all things? Does the mighty truth appear too great for the grasp of some little one in the Lord's dear family? The smallness of your knowledge of your privileges, does not detract from the greatness of the reality;

just as the absence of knowledge in the babe, who is heir to a noble domain, does not in the least degree diminish his right and title to it. He merely lacks the pleasure such a knowledge will produce in his mind, when he comes to the full perception of his title, and the value of his interest therein. But it is just this knowledge in the full-blown glory of it, which the worldling cannot understand. It was this soul-enobling knowledge which caused the face of Stephen to shine with glory, as he prayed for his murderers (Acts vii. 60). It was this soul-enobling knowledge which animated the long line of martyrs, who could glory in tortures: "not accepting deliverance," "of whom the world was not worthy." It was this that could make feeble men, and delicate women, with shouts of triumph, and tears of jov, kiss the stake with more delight than a drowning man would embrace his deliverer. It was this knowledge which overcame the mad wanderer among the tombs, and brought him to the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind. It was this knowledge which transformed the exacting narrow-hearted miser Zaccheus, into a noble-minded benefactor. It was this knowledge that quenched the fire of that thirst for blood, in the spirit of the persecuting Saul, and brought him up into the noble, but meek spirited, persuader of men, to whom he became all things, if by any means he might win some. was this knowledge which transformed that debased sinner Magdalene, into one of the noblest and most highly honoured saints of God. How incomparable and how blessed then is this knowledge. and why? because the object of this knowledge is so superlatively glorious! it is enobling, transforming, glorifying! as we grow in it, the world loses its attractions; time, and all time-trifles, become as a vapour which is swiftly passing away; the mind and the heart, is carried far beyond the reach of all changing things, and centred in that inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, Christ Himself being the fulness of the whole. Yes, it is glorifying, for as we grow in this knowledge, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

Now, no man ever knew this better than the Apostle Paul; therefore laying aside all other knowledge, he goes to the Corinthians, "determined not to know any thing among them save

Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

Before we proceed, we must pause and listen to the sighing of the Lord's trembling ones. Why dost thou sigh, poor troubled one? Art thou a true seeker of the Lord? beginning to feel after Him (Acts xvii. 27), by the outgoing of desire for mercy, and pardon, and peace, through His blood? couldst thou see the spring of those desires, thy sighs would be turned into songs of thanksgiving, and all thy groans into high hallelujahs. But thou art ever the subject of so much darkness of mind? thy thoughts when attempting to fix on divine things, are so greatly distracted? when thou wouldest chain down the vanity of the creature, and apply thy heart unto the "one thing needful," a thousand pressing matters will rush through the mind, so that thou cans't not continue five minutes in one stay? Thou fearest thou art not truly in love with (hrist, because the world, and time-things, sinful flesh, and a proud heart, deceitful above all things, cause thee daily to stumble? moreover, thou art greatly perplexed perhaps, by a certain pious friend, whose zeal and devoted activity cause thee to feel ashamed to be in their company, and if thou dost breathe a word about thy helpless condition, and multiplied fears, a volley of "ought to Do's," "ought to BE's," mingled up with as many half-scolding, "ought nor's," freeze thy spirit, and send thee away almost in despair. Yet in the midst of all this we say to thee, poor struggling one, "Fear not." Job's friends were miserable comforters, and so will all those prove to a broken-hearted sinner, whose piety is seen more in the outward—though in itself excellent-circumstances of religion, than in the inward communion which goes on between the Lord's hidden ones—who often go mourning, and softly, and praising their adorable Lord in secret. The Publican, who could not as much as look up, but smote upon his breast, crying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner," and not the self-satisfied Pharisee, went down to his house justified. Pharisee had but one nature in him, he had never been born from above; the Publican had a new nature, which being from God, saw and felt sin to be exceeding sinful, therefore he groaned, being burdened. Wherever these two natures are, there must be a constant warfare, and it is the contendings of these two armies (Song vi. 13), within thee, that causeth thee all thy exercise and fear; and it is thus expressed by Paul (Gal. v. 17), "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ve would." It is clear that if a person has not the Spirit, the flesh has it all its own way. If the bent of the mind lead into a profession of religion, the flesh can find as much pleasure, yea, more, in the various excitements connected with a religious life,

than it can in the ball, the concert, or the Opera. Satan knows where his counterfeit is being treasured up, and would be divided against himself if he were to disturb the peace of such an one: but, let him discover a true spiritual hungering and thirsting after righteousness, he will bring all his artillery to bear upon that soul; and so dispute every step in the pilgrim's path, that, like the Psalmist (Psal. cvii. 23), he is often "doing business in great waters, they mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro" [how exactly does this describe the debatings which go on in a new-born soul!

"Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?"

"It is the Lord's doing, and—we confess—it is marvellous in our eves." How long he keeps his beloved ones-his Benjaminsweeping at his feet, before he discloses to them his dear relationship; before he draws aside the vail, and smilingly tells them, "I am Joseph thy brother."] "They stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wir's END;" or, as the margin reads, "all their wisdom is swallowed up." Whatever may be the thoughts of the poor exercised child of God in such a case as this, the spiritual teaching which arises out of it, and the knowledge of a great and precious Deliverer which is gained by being brought into such straits, is of more value than all that this world can put in competition with it. And why? It is in such a position of special spiritual distress, when all their own wisdom is swallowed up, and they can find no power to help, but are brought like a sinking Peter to their WIT'S END; they are compelled to "cry unto the Lord in their trouble," "Lord, save me!" Another moment, where would Peter have been? but just at the needed juncture: not one moment before he was at his wir's END, nor one moment too LATE, he stretches forth his hand-"Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him [eternal praises to his loving-kindness, how many poor Peters has He caught since? Fear not, He will catch thee, poor soul.

'How can I sink with such a prop,
Who bears the world and all things up?']

and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Now let us observe, knowledge is gained by teaching; and it is by this mysterious mode of dealing with his own beloved children, that the Lord Christ brings them into a thousand positions to need, to seek, and to know, his wonderful power, the suitability of his

grace, and the deep compassion of his loving heart.

But some will say, "I have known, or hope I have known, the Lord for years, and still I am no further than a learner yet; I cannot come to a settled point, so as to keep fast hold of my hope." You have yet to learn a few more lessons in Paul's school. There is something you are seeking to know besides that simple "one thing is needful;" and that "one thing" is that which Paul had learned. You are looking for two things. You admire Christ with one eye, it is true, but you want to admire yourself with the other. But it is a "single eye" fixed on "Jesus only," which brings glory to God, and peace into the renewed soul.

If you honestly weigh the matter, you will perceive that your discontent does not arise from what you do not see in Christ, but from what you do not see in yourself. You want to be more stable, you are ashamed to go morning by morning as poor and as empty, as weak and as needy, as unworthy and as uncomely in yourself as ever. My brother! the Lord help you to be content with such thinks as you have; for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." And He has told us that it is "of his fulness"—not of a deposit of that fulness committed to our own keeping and improvement, but directly from, in, and of Himself—" of HIS fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

His grace and peace be with you all. Amen.

JESUS ONLY. No. 3.

" For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."—1 Cor. ii. 2.

THE queen of Sheba having heard of Solomon, and all his wisdom and glory, her heart went forth in desire to see this great king. In obedience to the attractive power of this mighty person, she goes forth, "And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart." This is exactly descriptive of the Bride of Jesus in her first spiritual movements towards Him; and that which remains of the history of the queen of the south, beautifully sets forth the effects on the renewed souls of the Lord's people, when by the power of the Spirit, their understandings being enlightened, they are able by faith to apprehend and know a little of the glory, majesty, power, wisdom, and beauty, of

our most glorious Christ.

Sheba's queen communed with Solomon, and told him all that was in her heart, just like a confessing, imploring, desiring sinner. "And Solomon told her all her questions." "Come see a man that hath told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?" "And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in my own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom" (1 Kings x. 1-8). Our present limits will not admit of our going over this beautiful typical history in all its features; each so sweetly containing in type that which is opened to faith, when every renewed child of God is brought into the presencechamber, and privileged to contemplate the Person of Christ as He is now "EXALTED, a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to [his spiritual] Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts v. 31).

But, we go on to remark, that while we contemplate Paul's determination, "not to know anything among men but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," we must not do as many seem inclined to do. confine the subject before us to the crucifixion of Christ alone; as

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, NO. 3.

though the Apostle had said, he determined to know nothing but Christ crucified—as many misquote this passage: but Paul's statement is most full and express; that his only subject should be "Jesus Christ," the Saviour of his body, and the Anointed of the Father; which must include in it all that Paul knew of the glory of his Person, the perfection of his work, his fulness of grace, and the precious suitability of his dear relationship to his Church. Indeed to know Christ Jesus fully, is to know all that He is made of God unto us, all that He possesses for us, all that He has said and promised concerning us, and all that He has done to make the whole secure, for our eternal blessedness, and his own eternal glory. Then the Apostle adds, "And him crucified," as the especial point in this knowledge, towards which every precious line of spiritual testimony converges.

Before, however, we can appreciate in any full measure "Christ crucified," we must be acquainted with his personal glory and excel-

lency as Immanuel. God with us.

His eternal power and Godhead is manifested in all the stupendous works of creation, and by the majesty of that wisdom and power by which He now sustains and conducts the affairs of the mighty universe with such marvellous grandeur and precision. Views of the glory of Christ, however, drawn alone from such objects, tend only to fill the mind with awe, such as is calculated to keep the sinner who is made sensible of his nothingness and deep pollution by nature, at a fearful distance from His throne. Therefore the Holy Ghost by Paul so sweetly blends together the dear Redeemer, and the great Creator; so that while on the one hand he would present the fullest ground for confident trust and repose, because of his Almightiness, on the other he points out the tenderness of his condescension, as our "Brother born for adversity." We have an instance of this Col. i. 13, where Paul writes, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature not the first created, for then He would Himself be a creature; but the First-BORN before every creature. For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible [think of the infinite expanse of this mighty power]; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and For Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body. the Church." On this sacred UNION hangs our blessedness!

"'Twas our Creator for us bled,
The Lord of life and power;
Whom angels worship, devils dread,
God bless'd for everunore."

While this is the precious foundation-stone of the hope of a truly living child of God, who feels that nothing short of such a power as that which created the world, could bring him up from so low a place in the horrible pit of corruption, in which he discovered himself to be lying when Divine light and life first entered his soul. and which he daily most deeply feels to be as needful to hold him up in safety during every step in his pilgrim journey—while it is the main stay of such a one—it must be, let men pretend what they may as to their belief of it, a stumbling-stone and a rock of offence, to all who are not, by living feeling, and spiritual teaching, brought down to this total self-nothingness. They cannot, they do not, believe in their hearts, that this most glorious Person whom Paul here describes, and of whom Isaiah speaks as "the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary," is as truly one with each living member of his mystical body, as the hand which writes these lines is one with the head in which these thoughts full of eternal blessedness, revolve. Therefore, such would have us believe they are too humble to look these things fully in the face; they insinuate that it is presumption; but the day of decision shall prove, if the Spirit tear not away the vail before, that it is but a mock-humility which covers over positive unbelief, and the unsubdued enmity of the carnal mind, to the whole truth as it is in Take such to the manger of Bethlehem; point to that newborn babe; whisper in their ears Mr. Hart's words—

"As much Almighty at his birth,
As on his throne supreme;
His shoulders held up heaven and earth,
When Mary held up Him."

But who is Mr. Hart? some will say. "To the word and to the testimony," then. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. v. 2). Again, take the man who curls his lip in mock-humility, into that upper room; let him observe that lowly one girded with a towel, and washing the feet of a few wandering fishermen! Then turn to the mighty expanse of heaven, and repeat Isaiah's testimony—"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that He is strong in power;

not one faileth" (Isa. xl. 26). Behold in that lowly Man, the great Creator and Sustainer of all! But turn not away from Him until you have listened to a few words from his own sacred lips; and these words spoken by Him just after He had thus washed the feet of his disciples; "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John xvii. 21, 22). It is this combination which is the glory of the Church, while it is the stumblingstone and rock of offence to all who are not led by the Spirit. He is thus in all the fulness of his glory, as the Head of his body, the Church, one in eternal union with her; yet one in eternal union with the Father, and one in nature with him too. So that while it is not robbery for our glorious Christ to claim equality with the Father (Phil. ii. 6), yet it is ever his delight to proclaim his relation to his Church, confirming Paul's testimony, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. v. 29). But to know, and live in the sweet fellowship of this union with Jesus Christ, is only by the Spirit; and it is only by the Spirit any man can thus truly call Jesus, Lord. Taking in by the grasp of faith the mightiness of his glorious Person on the one hand, as God over all, blessed for evermore; and on the other, the oneness in nature, life, and blessedness, which we possess in unchangeable union in Him.

But to contemplate Calvary in all its grandeur, it is necessary to kneel with Stephen, and by faith "behold the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii. 55). Still, however, holding fast that foundation for all our hopes; our abiding union to Him, and consequently our personal interest in every circumstance, full of glory, which we behold in the exaltation of our own most glorious Head, at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

There is something unutterably glorious in beholding Jehovah Jesus going forth in his works of creation; but there, although faith rejoices in the mystery, yet we do not behold our own nature engaged in the work. But as we turn the eye of faith to "the Man of sorrows"—as we trace the compassion of his loving heart in all the many mighty displays of his power, on behalf of the poorest and most needy, as we listen to those lips which spake as never man

spake, and wonder and adore as we hear the gracious words which proceed from his mouth, as we behold Him unmoved by the threats of the mighty in all the dignity of his spotless purity, rebuking the "whited sepulchres," and casting forth the challenge, "which of you convinceth me of sin?" or, as we sit down and watch the tear of affection trembling in his sacred eye, then we seem to draw near and realize the closeness of that blessed relationship in which we stand in Him: here we seem to realize "our Brother born for adversity." But we must not stop here, but trace Him on as the glorious Conqueror; the Captain of our salvation, spoiling principalities and powers; drinking the cup of vengeance—yea, quenching the flames of hell with the sweat of his brow, and with the blood of his cross; and then, to crown all, entering the territories of death, that he may swallow that up also in victory. And all this, "clothed in a body like our own"—all this "for his body's sake, which is the Church." [Here we must implore the Holy Spirit to open the fulness of the rich mercy involved in all this, to every seeking sinner.] Wherever Christ went, it was in union with his body, the Church; whatever He accomplished, his body accomplished in Him. Yes, the very feeblest member, by virtue of union to Him, accomplished all in Him. "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." What sin? Not His own individually; for "in Him was no sin;" but the sin of his body, the Church. Nor is this mode of punishing for sin, considered contrary to strict justice among men even: for many a thief has stolen with his hands, and received the just wages on his back. When, however, the punishment was over, although the back had not sinned, but the hands; yet the hands and the whole person were looked upon as free. Justice was satisfied. So in the case of all that has been done, suffered, and accomplished by our glorious Head. If, then, sin is put away; all that hell extinguished, which the Church must have suffered eternally if God had not found a ransom; death swallowed up in eternal victory, and Satan's power for ever broken; what can bring that body of Christ into condemnation? What shall separate it from the love of Christ? She—the Church—his body—is his glory, "A crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God;" and He has said, "My glory will I not give to another!" Well may Peter exclaim "Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure"-be content with nothing short of the sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. Therefore, holding fast the iewel of union, we sing

"Hail sacred union! firm and strong,
How great the grace, how sweet the song,
That worms of earth should ever be,
One with incarnate Deity!

"One in the tomb, one when he rose, One when he triumphed o'er his foes; One when in heaven he took his seat, While Seraphs sung all hell's defeat!"

Yes, one with Him in the tomb! He was our glorious head there! But now behold Him! no more the Man of sorrows; bursting the tomb, and coming forth! the same dear precious body—our very nature still—our glorious head still—as much so as when suffering the just for the unjust. The Holy Ghost by Paul, gives us some blessed testimonies respecting the resurrection of Christ. First (Rom. i. 3, 4), in opening his epistle to the Romans, Paul tells them he is "Separated unto the Gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh; and declared [determined, marked out, or proved] to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness; by the resurrection from the dead." Again Paul preaching at Antioch, said, "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Acts xiii. 32). Now, the blessedness to be gathered from these testimonies is, that Christ, in our very nature, was thus acknowledged or proved to be the Eternal Son of the Father in truth and love, and thereby all that he had said of Himself, and all that He had done for, and said of his body the church, which was in eternal union with him, received confirmation and the approbation of his God and Father, and ours. and to confirm us in our union, and His delight in it, His very first message to his disciples, after his resurrection, proves to us that his mind and affections had undergone no change towards his body the Church; for as in his prayer, as recorded in John xvii., He acknowledges us before His Father, and dwells upon the blessed oneness we have in Him with God the Father; so now in His resulrection body, He delights to say, "Go to my brethren-not ashamed to call them brethren—and say unto them, I ascend unto MY Father, and your Father, and to MY God, and Your God." What can be more blessed? still we proceed another

The Apostle, writing to Timothy, gives us an epitome of the

whole: "And without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, RECEIVED UP INTO GLORY " (1 Tim. iii. 16). Our Advocate with the Father, before his death, pleaded—or rather on the behalf of his body the Church-demanded for us the fulfilment of covenant engagements on the Father's side. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." But observe, our glorious Head had just prayed for Himself (John xvii. 5); "And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." This prayer was answered, for "He was received up into glory." And since He is now in his own glorified person, yet still in our own nature, in full possession of that which He asked his Father to give Him on his own behalf: shall He not prevail finally by bringing up the whole of his dearly loved, dearly purchased body? Can any doubt it? We know many of the dear members of that body, will sigh over their doubts and fears, as to their interest in Him; but fears alter nothing as to the security. but rather prove the reality of the desire after Christ. There could be no desire without love, no love without faith, no faith without life (spiritual) and no spiritual life without eternal union. Eternal praises to our glorious Head! He is received up into glory.

Now the glorious rays of resurrection blessedness begin to descend, and light up that sacred garden, and that sacred mount: It is in this light, in the resurrection glory of our exalted Christ, we hope to return again, and contemplate Golgotha, and Geth-

semane.

It is as we stand as children of this resurrection cloudless-day we can understand Peter's song of praise, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [or eternally living] hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. i. 3). This could only take place as we were in Christ Jesus when he rose from the dead in union with Him—

"One glorious Head, one body there. Who shall at last one glory share."

And the same must be said also of Paul's declaration (Eph. ii. 4), "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us

sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." It is by virtue of union, these more than golden mercies flow to us; and in this light must we read that unalterable mercy; "Ye are complete in Him." If complete, what more can be added? "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ [in our very nature, touched with a feeling of our infirmities], sitteth [in all his glory] at the right hand of God; set your affections on things above" (Gol. iii. 1).

But, one more momentary glance at our most glorious Christ, in our own nature, in the fulness of his exaltation (gathered from Hebrews i.) "God's Son, whom He hath appointed, [though in fashion as a man heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds: who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand [the highest post of honour] of the Majesty on high; worshipped by command of his Father by angels; proclaimed by his Father Eternal God, Creator of all things, and eternal King; and anointed with the oil of gladness above | or as the Head of his fellows." And we have reason to bless Him, He does not leave us joyless, but as in his wisdom He sees his members need it; the oil of gladness flows down to the skirts of his garments, even to gladden poor worm Jacob, though his dwelling is in the dust. Fear not, poor trembling Jacob: thy glorious Head is thy exalted Friend, and thy Brother born for adversity; the Lord help thee to remember

> "The foot can't be crushed upon earth, And the head be unconscious in heaven!"

His peace be with you all. Amen.

JESUS ONLY.

No. 4.

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—1 Cor. ii. 2.

SATAN'S grand design in all the fashions and schemes, whether religious or otherwise, which he is continually devising among men, is to keep poor sinners from Christ. Satan well knows the value of that teaching which makes "Jesus only" the "all and in all" to an otherwise perishing sinner; therefore, both before and after divine calling, he cares not where a man reposes, so that it is not on Christ.

And Satan is not at a loss for means; he has a thousand engines ever at work with which he accomplishes his purpose. The main ones, and especially those which he employs to cast down and clog the upgoings of a living child of God, are "the lust of the flesh. the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," working through and with the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the folly of fame, the pride and care of children; or, as in the case of Joshua (Zech. iii. 1—3), resisting the living child by holding up his filthy rags; causing unbelief to preponderate, and carnal reason to argue. "How can I be a child of God, and yet thus?" Or again, by pointing to the effects of his own malicious workings in and upon the flesh, by which he has produced so much coldness of heart. rebellion, and darkness of mind, confusion in prayer, and felt distance from that dear communion, which perhaps in days that are past, so sweetly inflamed the heart with love to the Lord, his people. and his ways. But what is all our brooding over these things in their miserable effects, but just doing that which Satan had designed to accomplish by his systematic proceeding? There is but one remedy, a single eye fixed upon Christ, and a single word upon the lip in answer to every question, objection, and accusation of the adversary, and that word, "Christ." This is enough! Try it! whenever, and however Satan comes, simply say, "But Christ" He will know what you mean, and he can no more stand against such artillery as this, than we can overcome him in our own strength. Ten million accusations, objections, or questions, find THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, NO. 4.

an instant answer in that precious name, "Christ." I think it is dear Luther who says something like this, somewhere, "I have long ago done with all reasonings with the devil, let him come as a black devil to tempt, or as a white holy devil to accuse, let him go on for a month together if he chooses, all I say to him is Christ! Christ! Christ!

Now, Paul had learned this science; therefore he says, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. vi. 14), not in two crossed sticks stuck up by "Devil, Pope, Pusey and Co.," No! but "Jesus Christ and Him. CRUCIFIED."

In our first lecture we looked at the source of Paul's determization; love to the Person of Christ. In our second, we briefly pointed out the nature and source of the knowledge Paul had of Christ. In our third, we have attempted to fix the eye of faith on the personal glory and exaltation of Christ, all of which must be in some measure understood, before we can enter blessedly into the fulness of our precious subject, namely, Christ crucified.

Paul includes in the phrase, "The cross of Christ," the whole of the passion of Christ, his sufferings and death; as it is still used to express the suffering of his body the Church in this wilderness; neither is there any discharge in this war, for she (the Church),

shall take up his cross daily, and so follow Him.

The cross of Christ was the most glorious exhibition that ever was or ever will be witnessed in time; for eternity past sent forward all its rays as to this one great centre; and eternity to come will but be adding continual lustre to that one most glorious scene!

The cross of Christ was the great pay-table where God's infinite justice met our Surety, spotless in his individual Person, or He could not have paid for others, that which justice must have demanded for Himself alone. But there stood the Bridegroom of his fallen sinful Church, infinitely pure, infinitely mighty, infinitely full of grace. The covenant was unrolled—the marriage deed, with all its ancient settlements, produced, the claims of justice on the Bride of Jesus brought to a total; and He, true to his oath, "for the joy that was set before Him," as He beheld his redeemed afar off, "the travail of his soul," said to her, "Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shall not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine Husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the

Holy One of Israel: the God of the whole earth shall He be called" Behold! Justice demands his claim. The Husband's love prevails. He points to the mighty sum, and says, "THAT AWFUL DELT IS MINE!" The thunders of eternal wrath roll with terrific furv: the Father hides his face; that marriage-bond has caused the curse to rest upon the sacred brow of Him who never sinned. His temples pierced with thorns proclaim the fact, that iniquities unnumbered are caused to meet upon his drooping head (Isa. liii. 6). Thus "made sin" (2 Cor. v. 21); and standing as a guilty one before the bar, the sentence issues forth, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered for go free]: and I will turn my hand upon the little ones" (Zech. xiii. 7). The sword awoke at the command—a flaming sword—our Husband bowed his head, the sword was bathed in our eternal heaven, and the flowings of his sacred blood for ever quenched the fire of wrath: justice proclaimed his satisfaction, and the captive bride was for evermore set free!

> "Well might the Sun in darkness hide, And shut his glories in; When God, the mighty Maker, died For man, the creature's sin.

"Thus might I hide my blushing face, While his dear cross appears; Dissolve my heart in thankfulness, And melt my eyes in tears."

In this most glorious exhibition, were displayed the infinite wisdom, power, and love, of our covenant God. How glorious the design! for who shall say this "wisdom of God in a mystery," was not designed? while the Apostle declares, "Him, delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23). How grand and majestic in the almightiness of his power, does our precious Christ stand forth as we watch the progress of the battle. "He hath trodden the wine-press alone;" forsaken of his friendsyea, forsaken of his Father too! Amazing scene! Well may the wondering and adoring Church burst forth in her choruses of praise. "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory" (Psal. xcviii. 1). But it is on the cross we trace the fulness of Jehovah's love. "God is love." Where is the proof? In Bethlehem. in Gethsemane, on Calvary! "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10).

"Love was the great self-moving cause, From whence salvation came; And grace the channel where it flows, Eternally the same."

It will form the eternal rapture of the Church in her glorified state, to lose herself in this boundless ocean of love—the love of the Father, the love of the Son, the love of the Spirit.

> O love, how high thy glories swell; How great, immutable, and free! Ten thousand sins, as black as hell, Are swallowed up, O love, in thee.

Is it so, poor troubled sinner? Yes, you reply, it is even so; but my heart is so unfeeling, my faith, if I have any, so very feeble, I am so like Reuben, unstable as water, that I am constantly fearing something is wrong, and I shall fail at last. But stop, trembling one! Where art thou looking? At Christ crucified? at love bleeding on the cross? No. Hast thou ever had a momentary glimpse of thy King Jesus in all his beauty, as the mighty Warrior. going forth conquering and to conquer, with his vesture dipped in blood, while the Spirit in a small still voice whispered in thy soul, "That Conquerer bled for thee?" Yes, you think, you hope you have. Was it by looking at thyself, thy hard heart, thy feeble faith, this bright and precious vision came? No; "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." Then, the Lord help thee, to "turn away thine eyes from beholding vanity;" to cease measuring thyself by thyself, and to look simply to Calvary, and contemplate that scene of Almighty love; so that it may be your determination with Paul to know yourself, not in yourself, but as you stand in "Jesus only."

Would we hate sin, and "resist unto blood striving against sin?" It is while the eye of faith rests upon this wonderful exhibition of God's hatred of sin, we discover its intensity of exceeding sinfulness. How great must God's abhorrence of sin be, when we behold the Lamb of God—because "made sin for us"—in all his agonies, and yet hear the Holy Ghost say, "It pleased Jehovah to bruise him!" It is from the death of Christ, the new man draws his life and vigour. And just in proportion as the thoughts and affections are centred on the Person of Christ, and as we have fellowship in sweet meditation of Him, in his sufferings; so the new man shall grow in grace;

and this grace, in its very nature, and by its properties, "teacheth us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live

soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

There is, moreover, one other view of this grand exhibition of the love of Jehovah to the Church we must notice; "For it became Him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering" (Heb. ii, 10). How precious this view of Him, learning perfectly in his own Person, by his own sufferings, how to understand the daily needs of his dear body, the Church. By his deep soulsuffering. He plunged below the deepest agonies any of his members ever suffered in spirit; and by his bodily sufferings, He perfectly understands the severest bodily pain; while in his mental sufferings, none of his members could ever point to distress which equalled that shame, that rebuke which He passed through! Poor suffering brother! think of thy precious Christ thus, ever remembering He is perfect in his own personal knowledge of all-suffering. It is from this Paul draws that sweet conclusion, "For we have not an Highpriest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15).

We come now to glance at a few of those things which were finished, fulfilled, or swallowed up upon the cross. And we ask every truly earnest seeker of Jesus, to tell us after they have passed over the little catalogue what now remains really to cause them to go bowing their heads like bulrushes, instead of lifting up their voices.

in praise and thanksgiving?

Sin was finished (Dan. ix. 24); put away (Heb. ix. 26). How far away? "As far as the east is from the west; so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Psal. ciii. 12). Where is the point in boundless space from which we must begin to measure the distance that separates the east from the west? Thus infinitely distant are our sins removed from us. The Lord the Spirit open the fulness of this finished work, and Christ crucified will become eternally precious to the soul: for, since the sting of death is sin, if sin is eternally gone, death has no longer any substance in it. The sting taken away, we may go on another step in our rejoicing, and sing, "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The resurrection of Christ was the fruit of the cross; therefore it is on the cross we see this victory obtained,

and not only over death and sin, but also over the law, which being the strength of sin, is that which gives it condemning power.

Christ crucified "Is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4). Not the ceremonial law—for the Gentiles were never under that—but the moral law. Moses cannot pass by the cross to condemn a sinner who by faith has taken refuge there, excepting as a prophet to proclaim the promises of God contained in the law, which are all "in Christ, yea, and in Him, amen, to the glory of God by us." On the cross every simple believer beholds the sealing of a new covenant, which declares openly that the old covenant has been fulfilled. It is no longer "This do and live;" but, "Because I live ye shall live also."

Moreover, in the cross we behold the final destruction of the devil and his works. He is now a destroyed foe, filling up the measure of his iniquity. Fear not, poor tempted one—

"That enemy can't boast of much, Who makes us watch and pray!"

Mark the blessedness of the Apostle's testimony, (Heb. ii. 14); "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise, took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil." Cheer up then, fellow-pilgrim, the lion may roar, but he shall prove an empty noise after, all his threatenings.

Now the Lord help thee to sit down and brood over these glorious truths, and then ask thyself, and Satan too, what Christ has left unfinished that can prevent a needy sinner who goes to Him from obtaining all his desire?

But finally, there are yet several precious points of sweet present blessedness to be drawn from this knowledge of Christ crucified.

As before the glorious scene was really opened on Calvary, every type under the Old Testament dispensation pointed to it; every prophet saw it in vision, and the faith of all the patriarchs and worthies centred on the cross: so now, it is the Church's blessed meeting-place. In our preaching and conversation, while we hold up the glories of Christ's adorable Person in one hand, we point to the cross with the other, and shout, "All are yours." Love is in the cross, and love attracts all those in whom that precious promise is fulfilled, "I will give them a heart to know me." The more He is known, the more powerfully love flows forth; and the more love, the sweeter the attraction:—"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all [my people] unto me."

As our glorious Advocate stands up to plead our cause, He prevails, be our case ever so desperate—and why? He points to His cross!

The Spirit, in his daily ministry in the Church, takes of the things of Jesus, and reveals them to faith; but whence flows the virtue? Even from the cross. As the dear Comforter, He brings all his balm from Calvary—as the Remembrancer, in the midst of a thousand daily needs, what is the subject of his whispers in the soul? He points to Jesus only, and sweetly reminds the drooping Spirit of Christ crucified.

"Well He remembers Calvary, Nor lets his saints forget."

Life and immortality are brought to light through the Gospel. But what good news to poor hell-deserving sinners, could there be in the fact that Jesus lived, if Jesus had not died? The fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ then, is to be sought for in the cross!

Where is the treasure of the Church? What was her redemption-price? The precious blood of Christ! The Lord help thee, dear brother, to warble out Mr. Hart's sweet testimony:—

"But while I make my secret moan, Upwards I cast my eyes, and see, Though I have nothing of my own, My treasure is immense in Thee!

My treasure is thy precious blood!
Fix there my heart!" * *

It is with the faith and affections fixed here, that we can follow our Great High-priest into the holiest of all; and because we know that He hath for us entered with his own blood, we venture "boldly to the throne of grace, and find grace to help us in every time of need." It is in sight of the cross a child of God can stand fearlessly, and look forward into the future, holding fast the word of encouragement (Rom. viii. 31). "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" and to this he may add the opening and the closing testimonies of that precious chapter, "No condemnation and no separation!"

It is a sight of the cross in all its loveliness and power, that brings down every high look. Yes,

"Thy garden is the place,
Where pride cannot intrude;
For, should it dare to enter there,
'Twould soon be drown'd in blood."

And what so blessed, as for a proud but bankrupt sinner, to find himself with a broken heart at the foot of the cross, reading the unchangeable declaration, "And when they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both."

When the enemy cometh in like a flood, it is the droppings of Calvary that quencheth his fiery darts; it is the glorious cross that forms the standard to chase him away; and it is the cross that supplies the palm of victory to the hand of faith after every fresh onset.

It is in the cross the timid child of God finds his earnest of final perseverance; and it is from Calvary he comes away, singing,

"Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
Are the glorified spirits in heaven!"

It is the cross in all its glory, that stamps darkness, death, and misery on the world; that dissolves all its charms, and for ever delivers the new-born soul from the power of its vain entanglements. How blessedly Paul experienced all this, and far, far more than our little thoughts can reach. Then, like him, the Lord help us to hold fast his determination; for we too, can sing, while gazing on Christ crucified—

"The cords that bound my heart to earth,
Were broken by his hand;
Before his cross I found myself,
A stranger in the land.

That visage marred, those sorrows deep,
The vinegar, the gall;
These were his gelden chains of love.
His captive to enthral.

My heart is with Him on the throne, And ill can brook delay; Each moment listening for his voice, 'Rise up, and come away.'"

His peace be with you all. Amen.

No. 1.

" Faint, yet pursuing"—Judges vii. 4.

THERE are multitudes of passages in the word of God which in themselves appear to have no immediate reference to spiritual things; but, as they are taken by the Spirit of God, and spoken with sweet power in the heart, they become full of marrow and fatness to the soul. They thus become suggestive words, and as the "unction from the Holy One" rests upon them, they expand and fill the soul with spiritual consolations, instructions, joy, and peace. Such are the three words before us, in themselves a mere item in the history of Gideon's wonderful conquest over the enemies of his people, but as dropped by the Comforter into the heart of a poor weary pilgrim, they become a cordial of great blessedness to cheer his drooping spirit. They whisper to him in his lonely, dark, thorn-strewed path, "Fear not, faint not, the Royal crown is at the end of the valley, the palm-branch is already in thy hand, the wall of fire is around thee, the foot-prints of thy princely captain are among the thorns, up then, and Forward!" How precious the response! though it be from a crushed and fluttering heart, yet every pulse replies while "reaching forth [with eager desire] unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark" (Phil. iii. 14), "Faint, yet pursuing."

The beautiful history of Gideon exhibits many precious points of likeness, full of spiritual instruction, to the children of God. Indeed the daily warfare and captivities of the spiritual Israel will ever cause the experience of this "mighty man of valour"

[THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 5.

to be among their choice mirrors, in which they can retire and trace their own peculiar features. A Gideon in the Old Testament, and a Thomas in the New, seem to be the suitable yoke-fellows of every little faith in the Royal family of our glorious King. We can only glance at a few of the prominent traits in

the picture.

Turning back in our Jewel case to [Judges chap. vi. 6], we find that "Israel was greatly impoverished." "Minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, an dsorrow." And is not this the daily-yes daily-condition spiritually of Israel now? However sweetly favoured vesterday in feeding upon the finest of the wheat, the honey, and the oil, to-day finds us again hungering, again impoverished, and as poor and empty as ever. How much of practice by the constant repetition of the lesson do we need, before we fully understand that it is perfectly right, and not only for our good, but also the best proof of spiritual health, that we should every morning awake from our slumbers feeling "greatly impoverished!" Look now at the effect of this felt captivity! "Israel cried unto the Lord." This is something more than the morning and evening petition, and is often to be found only in a secret yearning of heart which no speech can express, the bursting forth of an involuntary sigh, after a vain attempt to put into words the full import of that which we desire to tell the Lord concerning our needs and our emptiness. It is the upgoing of heart, the sigh, the groan, the gushing tear, that contains Israel's cries to the Lord. Beloved! do you know what it is to be daily impoverished and thus to cry? A notional professor, be his creed what it may, does not understand what we are now speaking of. Paul tells us why (1 Cor. ii. 14); "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." How soul-reviving it is to trace the effect of this cry in the history of Gideon before us, knowing that the same mighty angel of the covenant still comes down to deliver, and that He is Jesus, the same vesterday, to-day, and for ever.

We pass on to ver. 11, where we find Jesus as He then manifested himself to his people, sitting under the oak, watching poor Gideon as he laboured by the wine-press, in all diligence and prudence, to secure his daily bread, his anxious heart overflowing with care. What a picture of the Lord's Gideons now! How full of prudent anxiety, both in spirituals and temporals, as though all depended on our care and effort; yes, it is good to be watch-

ful, it is good to be diligent and prudent, but it is sad that the wavering mind is ever starting aside from the only point of true security, and forgetting that He who sat under the oak, and watched with tender sympathy the labouring Gideon, He who delighted to commune with Nathanael under the fig-tree, is now ever present. ever watching, ever tenderly sympathising with, and leading on by his Spirit, each individual member of his dearly-purchased family. Ah could we but see him always sitting under the oak, we too should delight more frequently to retire from our toils, sit at his precious feet, gaze into his glorious eyes, as into eternal fountains of love, until forgetting self and "the things that are behind," with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. This is, " sitting under his shadow with great delight." But as with Gideon so with us. There is the Lord, sitting under the oak, but He is not seen, until as in verse 12, "The Lord appeared unto him." We are as though we were alone in our labour, be it what it may, and lonely and bitter are the thoughts and sensations we are the subject of. until he softly and sweetly draws the vail from before our beclouded eye, and manifests himself in all his suitability and compassion. How surprising are his dear appearings! How totally do they change the entire aspect of affairs! without altering a single outward circumstance—He rises from behind the cloud—He shines! In an instant, all is beauty and grandeur-even the very clouds are guilded by his glorious rays, and add a finish to the scene. Yes, and tears too are needed, to bear aloft the covenant promise-bow which encircle all. The tears, the clouds, the labour all remain the same, and Himself remains the same, but now he shines, and we are happy, just now He was hiding himself and we were troubled (Psal. civ. 29).

His dearly loved appearings (2 Tim. iv. 8), are not, however, silent visits. And here again his words are as astonishing in their import, as the suddenness with which he draws aside the vail, behind which he hides himself. What must have been the wonder of poor anxious Gideon, not only at the sight he saw, but at the words addressed to him—"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour!" Is the Lord mocking the poor man? Oh no, observe Paul's comment upon these words when referring to Gideon. "Out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. xi. 34). But what was there in Gideon to warrant such an epithet and such a declaration? Was he a mighty man of valour? The subsequent history

proves him to have been a fearful one, a trembler like ourselves. Here then stood his claim to mightiness, he was total weakness in self, "Let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel iii. 10). It is thus the Lord measures our strength by our felt weakness, because then we are in a fit condition to set forth the glory of his grace by which alone we go forth, stand in the battle, and are "more than conquerors." But how hard is it for a poor devil-hunted Gideon to believe that the weaker he feels in self, the mightier and more valiant he stands in the Lord; yet the case is a most simple one. While we have any feeling of strength, we are inclined to stand outside our fortress, and give battle to the enemy at the gate; it is only when the enemy becomes overwhelming in numbers and power, that we take refuge in our fortress; and once inside there, compelled to trust wholly to the impregnable nature of our glorious strong tower, we become mighty and valiant as the Lord himself. And why? "The battle is the Lord's!" our strength is to sit still. This was the blessed secret Paul was taught by his "thorn in the flesh; " " My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Those of us who are not brought to a personal apprehension of this mystery have not yet been so entirely broken down in self as to come to our "wit's end" (Psal. cvii. 27) -whether by deep exercise of soul concerning our hope of salvation, or by temptation, or by afflictions, crosses, or persecution—for until brought here we shall ever be dwelling more upon our felt condition in self than on the untouchable security of "A man in Christ"—it is here he is a " mighty man of valour;" for says Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." is also thus, being in Christ, the declaration also is ours, at all times the same, although we can see nothing but clouds, and feel nothing but weakness, and destitution, yet "The Lord is with thee," not only by his presence, but also by his active power, working in and for us in all things and by all things, so that we may boldly say, " If God be for us who can be against us?"

Further, however, to show to every earnest one who would fain lay hold of these things, but fears to presume, that Gideon was in the very condition in which they are, when the Lord thus spake to him: we take another step in the sweet history: "And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" So strangely do we judge that those only are evidences of the Lord's love to us, and watchful care over us, which give us present satisfaction and comfort; whereas chastisement, in whatever shape, is as truly a love-token to the child

of God, as the sweetest consolations which are poured into the soul to heal the broken heart, and to bind up the wounded spirit. We know this is true in our judgments, but when a fresh rod is brought, how many of us will bend down the ear, and listen to the voice of the rod, knowing that every word it speaks to us is in tenderness and love? Indeed all our rods speak but one sentence to us, and they continue to speak until they make themselves heard, "My Son, give me thine heart." Alas! where does the rod often find the silly heart? "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. xxii. 15).

"And where be all his miracles which our Fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" Again, Gideon is here exactly like ourselves, remembering and dwelling upon only one portion of the miracle—the bright side of the story, the deliverance from captivity, and passing over the miracle of Israel's preservation, and astonishing multiplication, in the midst of Egypt, during such a long period of oppression and cruel bondage: passing over the long delays, the disappointed hopes, the apparent deaths to the promise; which, if fairly viewed, would tend to cheer the mind with hopeful expectations, however dreary the "But now," says Gideon, "the Lord hath present prospect. forsaken us." Yes, says the poor captive one, looking back on bygone moments of sunshine, "Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head" (Job xxix. 2); then it was easy to believe all was working together for good; but now, that the heart is cold and hard, the mind perplexed and bewildered; the word of God a sealed book, and the throne of grace, more like a solitary stone in the desert, where the awful stillness of death reigns, than the sweet cheerful spot where the silver bells of prayer and praise chime together at the meeting of happy communing friends. What! the Lord with us now?—no, says Gideon, "The Lord hath forsaken us." Poor little faith! But He is sitting under the oak still; every stroke of the labouring flail, tells a true story in His ear, and His heart is not unmindful of the sadness of thy countenance, and the desolate feeling that swells thy bosom with sorrow; thy "groanings which cannot be uttered," find a response in His sacred heart, so full of love and sympathy, that couldst thou hear it, thou wouldest understand how it is that a poor wrestling Jacob can be a prince, having power with God and prevailing; how it is that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent

take it by force." How otherwise are we to understand the answer the Lord gives to the appeal of Gideon? "And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might" (ver.

14).

There is something peculiarly precious in this expression, "the Lord looked upon him." And so when we go with our complaints about the prevalence of our enemies—sin, Satan, and the flesh the misery of our condition in our bondage frames, He still delights to look upon us. But how? as we are in our own feelings? No: but as we stand in his own personal beauty and perfections, He delights to look upon "the travail of his soul;" knowing that however deeply plunged in sorrow now, there remaineth a glorious rest—a blessed keeping of sabbath—for His people, and that at any moment He can open the closed gates of sweet communion, and sweetly draw the poor exercised Gideon into rest, even here. Again, this look carries the mind to that look which broke the heart of Peter. Yea, He is "Jesus Christ the same" now as then; and often when we are with Gideon in bondage, or with Peter in "the sieve." He turns and looks upon us; and while we expect desolation or rebukes. His look tells us of deliverance, pardon, and peace.

Gideon could not, however, understand, that felt weakness. and nothingness in self, is accounted mightiness and strength in the Lord. He looks to the flesh again, talks about being least in his father's house, and pleads that his family is poorest in Manasseh. How could he save Israel? The Lord gives him his sword -" The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." "And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee." And is there a faint and weary Gideon in all his family to whom He has not said the same? The Lord engrave the last words spoken by Jesus (as recorded in Matthew's Gospel), upon the heart of all his little faiths now! "Lo, I am with you ALWAYS, even unto the end of And furthermore, the Lord help each of his little the world." band of warriors, to gird this sword upon the thigh, and morning by morning as they go forth to their daily battles, the Lord help them to lift up the triumphant blade in the hand of faith, and give their battle shout, "Hast thou not said?" This is "taking with us words, and turning to the Lord;" and He cannot deny Himself!

Nevertheless, Gideon was not cast off; neither did the Lord rebuke him, because he could take nothing for granted; he must have proof upon proof that he was going upon sure ground. He therefore, in sweet humility, asked for three signs that the Lord was truly with him; and the Lord, who giveth liberally, bestowed First, by fire rising out of the rock, and conupon him four. suming the sacrifice which was laid thereon; and often does he repeat the same dear sign of His undying love, and favour towards us, by making our hearts burn within us as He talketh to us by the way, and opens to us the Scriptures. Secondly, by the fleece wet. Thirdly, by the fleece dry. Knowing a little by personal testimony in these matters, producing daily growing desire after more of it, we may venture to mention a sweet portion which forms a key to the spiritual wet and dry fleece. "My speech shall distil as the dew" (Deut. xxxii. 2). Of course in Gideon's case it was literal fleece and dew; but we must also look under the surface of the word for a spiritual suggestion, an application bearing upon ourselves. And here, as the Lord was not offended with Gideon for testing matters, neither is He with his little ones now, but rather delights to bestow spiritual tokens to confirm them in their hope, and also to confirm them in the way they are led to take in temporal things; for it is true of all the Lord's Spirit-taught children, that "the life we now live in the FLESH, we live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 2). The dew is the "still small voice" of the Spirit, taking of the things of Jesus, and showing them unto us, which so softens, subdues, dissolves the heart, that no language on earth can express the Divine sweetness and heavenly peace which thereby reigns in the soul; it lasts but a few moments; before we can fully realize all its sweetness, it is gone. Mary at the empty sepulchre, when she heard her name once pronounced by that all-glorious One who had become the centre of gravity to her soul, knew what the distilling of Divine dew could produce in a wounded spirit; her Rabboni was the wringing Who shall calculate how much of love, joy, and gratitude, was contained in that one word! Thomas had the fleece wet indeed, when he exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God!" This is personal. But sometimes the Lord will give us a word to rest upon through another; our fleece is then dry, still it strengthens and confirms: but Gideon's is best to have both; then we commune together, and we are encouraged to seek it; for it is written, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19). But this is an old-fashioned mode of procedure; nevertheless, the Lord honours old-fashioned faith! But the Lor added another unasked sure token to confirm his

warrior (see chap. vii. 9). What must have been Gideon's astonishment at hearing himself described as a barley cake? Just what poor needy sinners feel now, when they hear "one who has obtained mercy," describe himself as he was first taught and led on, instructed and brought low, that he might be stripped of self, and clothed with Christ; as the narrative goes on, he is ready to exclaim as hope buds forth—I am that sinner, surely Gideon is the barley cake!

We have now glanced at a few leading features which preceded the battle; in our next lecture we shall hope to stand by and see the salvation of the Lord, and watch the sure effects that all who engage in this battle, though faint, must still pursue.

No. 2.

"Faint, yet pursuing."-Judg. viii. 4.

EMPLOYING these words more in the character of a motto than a text, in our last lecture we ran over a few of the more peculiar features of Gideon's call to his work as a deliverer of God's Israel, at each step pointing out some of those parallel lines in the Spirit's teaching in all his people, more or less, which rendered Gideon a beautiful and instructive type of every member of the mystical body of Christ down to the end of time. For we read, that on the grand final day of review, when all the blood-bought warriors shall be mustered and defile before the great Captain of their salvation, this shall be the designation of every company, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 14):

We left Gideon in our last lecture listening with astonishment to the dream of the Midianitish soldiers, who saw a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian." "And the dream was certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. ii. 45). "And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped!" The solemn blessedness of this moment in Gideon's career, is experienced again and again by the tribulated family now. How often still, when the way appears hedged up on every hand, no way of escape from some impending cross, or no way of accomplishing some greatly-to-be desired object; when like Gideon with his army, the very means by which we hoped to succeed, has been reduced to a mere mockery, weighed in the balances of human prudence; yet in the midst of all this, before a single decisive step is taken, an appropriate word is so fixed upon the heart, by the power of the Spirit, that in an THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 6.

instant the thing is done so far as faith is concerned; the cry of victory rings through the soul, and the head bows in sacred astonishment and Divine worship: like Hannah with her promise, we go forth adoring our gracious God, with the countenance no more sad: as certain that no power can stand against us, as though the victory were a matter of history.

"Almighty faith the promise sees, And trusts to Christ alone; Laughs at impossibilities, And says, it shall be done!"

And woe to the enemies, many or few, who now stand before Gideon.

Mr. Hart has a very precious hymn upon this subject; where, speaking of these seasons of exercise, he says, he always turns to the dear Saviour, tells Him his troubles, and

"Then listens what the Lord will say, And hopes to follow that:

If Jesus seem to hide his face, What anxious fears I feel! But if he deign to whisper peace, I'm happy, all is well.

Confirmed by one soft secret word,
I seek no farther light;
But walk depending on my Lord,
By faith, and not by sight."

And we must add, whatever the wise and prudent among fashionable professors may say to the contrary, this is living to the glory of God, because it is living by faith; only, that it requires some practice in the divine art, and a little familiarity at court, before we can fully enter into the sweetness and simplicity of thus living in secret correspondence with the Lord, and hanging upon his testimonies. This is not resting on vague impressions, but seeking and obtaining confirming testimonies from the word of God, such as "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God," &c, powerfully spoken in or upon the heart, at a moment of intense trial, when heart and flesh is failing, which in an instant turns the whole current of feeling, and the trembling lamb is turned into a dauntless lion. We bless the Lord, we know these things to be true, by frequent experience, and therefore encourage every Gideon to follow the Psalmist's example—" I will hear what God the Lord will speak." It is not necessary now that He speak to us orally; there is not a case of need into which his people can come,

but He has faid up in Jesus and inscribed in the precious word, a promise for that need; and every promise in Him is YES, and in Him Amen—Sure; and the blessed Comforter delights to take of these things, and seal them on the troubled hearts of the Lord's needy ones. We dwell upon this point the more earnestly, because we know what sweetness follows in the worship that flows out when

these tokens of loving-kindness are dropped into the soul.

But we hasten to the battle-field. Truly the Lord's children need not be surprised if they are called by extraordinary names; for none but madmen, or those under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God, would do such things as they often are compelled to do. However, mad though it appear, they are on safe ground, if a "Thus saith the Lord," has been given them as a "true token."

On the one hand, look at the enemies of the Lord—mark, they are his enemies, and it is his battle; the Lord help us always to look at our foes in this light; it strengthens weak hands, and confirms feeble knees. What multitudes! "They lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number; as the sand by the sea-side for multitude." Look at them, secure in their might, reposing without an anxious thought! in a few moments where will they be? Look at their arms, their swords, and their spears, their bows, and their battle-axes! Now turn to the little "remnant according to the election of grace." Three bands of a hundred men each! But let us examine their accoutrements. No camels, no trappings, no grandeur! and what are their arms? A trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a lamp! And with these things they were to go forth, and to conquer! marvellous are the counsels of the Lord against the mighty! But are we merely to stand and gaze at the scene, as at a mere display of wonderful power? The "wise and prudent" of this our day, of "fair show" in fleshly religion, may say so; but what says the Holy Ghost by the great apostle Paul (1 Cor. x. 11); "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [margin TYPES]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Not that we should expect to conquer temporal armies in the same way, but that we should from these things gain spiritual instruction in the art of spiritual warfare. That Paul intends to refer to spiritual admonitions, is clear from what he says in the third and fourth verses of the same chapter; "And did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and did all drink of the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that SPIRITUAL Rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ!"

What then of spiritual instruction is every Gideon now to draw from the victory obtained by these singular tactics? In what way was all this a type of our daily battles?

Our enemies are as numerous and as strong, as ruthless and as godless, as Amalek or Midian.

THE WORLD-THE FLESH-THE DEVIL;

and the grand centre, if possible, more deadly in enmity than the two flanks. But the centre is with ourselves, a traitor in our own camp, and must be broken; then the two flanks join issue, and every man's sword is turned against his fellow.

We understand then, the empty pitcher as a type of the flesh—the "old man." The lamp, the life of God in the soul. And the trumpet, the Spirit of prayer and praise. Gideon the warrior and his little company—"Men in Christ" (2 Cor. xii. 2). "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works"

(Eph. ii. 10).

That the lamp is the life of God, we gather from the following testimonies. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4). Where there is no spiritual life, there can be no spiritual light; therefore "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishess unto him; neither can He know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). He that has no life, has no lamp, and walketh in darkness. Again, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in Earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor. iv. 6, 7). Here then we have the LAMP in the EMPTY PITCHER.

Now, we can never conquer the world and the devil combined, without breaking this empty pitcher; and this we do daily if led by the Spirit. Thus, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts" (Tit. ii. 12). "Knowing this, that our old man's crucified with Christ" (Rom. vi. 6). "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22). "Put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. iii. 9). "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24). It was thus Paul died daily, and he gives us a most beautiful example, in which he breaks the pitcher, and brings forth the lamp. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Dash

goes earthen pitcher, and out springs the precious lamp, accompanied by a blast of the trumpet, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 24, 25).

The trumpet is heard in the midst of the battle as the Spirit of prayer; as Paul (Eph. vi. 18), after going over an inventory of the whole armour of God, puts the trumpet into the right hand of the Lord's Gideons; thus, "Praying always with ALL PRAYER, and supplications in the Spirit." "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered" (Rom. viii. 26). Nor is there any weapon more terrible to Satan, or more powerfully overcoming with the world, than the simple prayer of faith.

"And Satan trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees."

And why? He knows the blasts of this trumpet, be they ever so feeble in the estimation of the suppliant, reach the ear and the heart of Him, who hath bound himself by an oath, that the seed of Jacob shall not seek His face in vain. We have many sweet instances of the effect of this trumpet, "Lord, save, I perish;" "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief;" "Lord, help me;" "Lord, remember me;" "If I may but touch the hem of His garment." But it is not only heard in supplication but in praise, as Paul blessedly comes forth out of self, and all self-emptiness, breaks the pitcher, elevates the lamp, and triumphantly blows the trumpet of praise thus: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL SPIRITUAL blessings in heavenly things in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," &c. Can we wonder at Satan and the world turning upon each other in rage and fury, while their malice and enmity against God is thus stirred up by hearing a poor helpless Gideon send forth from his trumpet such strains of sweet assurance, of the eternal blessedness and perfection in which he is caused to stand by the blesssing and choice of the unchangeable God! Again, crash goes the pitcher, the love flame of the lamp mounts high—and the silver trumpet gives forth its strains of gratitude and praise.

But Gideon pursues his enemies, and still though "faint is yet pursuing." And is not this a fit motto for each little Gideon now? Let us glance briefly at the causes of his faintness and the reason he still pursues.

The first thing which causes the Lord's younger Gideons to faint in the pursuit of victory over his enemies is the felt burden of sin upon his conscience. Who shall paint the dreadful condition of a sinner in this stage of his conflict? The law of God condemning not only his actions, but every thought of his heart, for he has now fearned the tremendous fact that the thoughts of foolishness are sin (Prov. xxiv. 9); he strives by every effort to subdue his thoughts and affections, and to bring them under the dominion of a chastened will, but all efforts are vain, the burden daily increases, the power of sin becomes greater, and the awful intensity of condemnation darkens the soul into the blackness of despair. And faint, and die, and perish, such a soul must, but that Jesus is at the end of this valley of the shadow of death, and the poor fainting one pursues, he know not how or why, because " The Father draws." (John vi. 44). This drawing of the Father by the Spirit is like the dropping, drop by drop, of oil upon the just expiring, flickering light in the lamp, enough to keep it from going out, but not enough to enable it to recover or burn up into a positive flame. Those who have been here, now look back with wonder how it was the fainting lamp was not put out, but infinite wisdom stands by and cannot err. Hope buds again and again, and although many of the Lord's people are kept long in this fainting condition, yet as the whole matter is dependent on the Lord himself, who wounds that his own hands may heal, and brings and keeps low that it may be manifest that he alone can raise up, the feeblest among them, however faint, shall yet pursue, until a precious Christ and full salvation, in and by Him -is sweetly sealed upon the soul, then the oil of joy shall make the lamp burn high and bright.

Weakness of faith, after we have received our pardon, is another cause of much fainting. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," enemies within and enemies without, constantly prevailing, to shake the hold of little faith upon the promise; so hard is it against hope to believe in hope, that sometimes when we stand still for a moment and reckon up accounts, we wonder how it is that so continually faint we yet pursue. How is it our feeble faith has not given way? most precious truth! "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," and as He did for Peter, so he daily does for us, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not!" therefore though "faint yet pursuing!"

Fiery temptations frequently cause the Lord's people to faint. How intensely heated are some of the furnaces! How unexpectedly

the floods come! after the sweetest moments of sacred peace and communion, in a moment the spirit reels under a thrust from a deadly shaft, all the infernal powers seems to have burst forth, and it seems impossible for the fainting one to stand his ground; and, though the trumpet is blown, the pitcher is broken, and the lamp is held up, unless the shout of a king were heard in the midst of the battle, "TOUCH NOT HIS LIFE!" all would be ruin. Well may David say, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped," (Psal. lxxiii. 2). "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard, which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved" (Psal. lxvi. 8). "faint yet pursuing."

Temporal burdens, crosses, clouds, opposition, disappointments, all produce continual faintings in the Lord's Gideons. Satan often makes such an instrument of these things to torture those over whose eternal interests he knows he has no power, that, although they are satisfied and live in the settled assurance, that their eternal house, not made with hands, is prepared for them, and that they shall surely go home to possess it after a few more turns in the wilderness, yet, like Jonah, because a worm has smitten some gourd in which they delighted, which, compared with eternal things, "grew up in a night" they are ready to say, "I do well to be angry, even unto death!" Can it be he is still pursuing with such awful rebellion as this upon his lips? Yea, have not many of God's children, in their fainting moments, under temporal burdens. looked at a dog or a horse, and secretly wished they could exchange their lot, even including eternal hopes? These are extreme points, but far too frequently occurring; yet Gideon is pursuing still, and whether his faintings under these burdens reach Jonah's deplorable spot, or is met at a degree of prostration less calamitous, it is the same gracious whisper that gives fresh power to the faint, breathing in a precious promise, or causing a cordial to run through the soul, helping faith to look out and up, and sing while faintly pursuing.

> "His love in times past, forbids me to think, He'll leave me at last, in sorrow to sink, Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review, Confirms his good pleasure to bring me quite thro'."

Afflictions of body and nervous fears, acting on a weak frame, often produce faintness of spirit, and here again Satan is most active in painting before the fainting agitated mind a thousand gloomy pictures of evil things foreboded, either as happening to

ourselves or to those dear to us. What is Satan's object in all this? simply to draw the mind and thoughts away from the loving-kindness of the Lord in Christ Jesus; nevertheless, a little reviving comes just in time to keep the heart in motion; the languid eye of faith once more looks out and exclaims, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Still then "faint, yet pursuing."

"Hungry and thirsty (says David), their souls fainted in them" (Psal. cvii. 5); and starve and famish would all the little band in Gideon's army, but the manna falls. Only wait till the morning,

when the sun is up! But alas! we fail in patience.

"Day by day the manna fell,
Oh, to learn this lesson well:
Day by day the promise reads,
Daily strength for daily needs."

Yes, and though thirsty, go outside the tent—out of self and all self-supplies—there stands the Rock of supply; it fails not, it is not weary; and because that spiritual Rock still follows, fear not; though faint, thou shalt still pursue. Yes, even when the foot is dipped in the Jordan. "The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint" (Isa. xl. 31).

THE LOT CAST INTO THE LAP.

No. I.

"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."—Prov. xvi. 33.

IT is a sad truth, that while there is not to be found on earth a single person who has cause for a moment's contentment, excepting a child of God, yet there are none who seem to be so prone to discontent as these only blessed ones. It is indeed a sin that doth easily beset them. If we were to meet the young Prince of Wales riding in his royal carriage, surrounded by his royal attendants, yet appearing fretful and peevish, and on enquiring we were to find his discontent arose from some such trifling cause as the momentary sting of a thorn, a passing cloud obscuring the sun, the fading of a favourite flower in his garden, or the difficulty of his daily lesson; should we not smile at his childish folly? yet how many of us are disquieting ourselves at this moment about a something, which when compared with our glorious immortal lot, is infinitely more triffing in reality than either of those insignificant things which we have supposed, as disturbing the even current of contentment in the young Prince.

Satan's great device, however, whereby he seeks to torment the children of God, is, that of thrusting almost moment by moment things earthly, sensual, or devilish between the eye of the Believer and his glorious lot, to take his mind off from his inheritance—his most glorious Christ. Our daily experience tells us how constantly he succeeds in this device, nevertheless, the secret of divine contentment is to be learned. Paul knew it: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," (Philiv. 11); and he also adds (1 Tim. vi. 6), "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Since then it can be learned, and it is so blessed when attained, let us, as the Lord helps us, take

another lesson to-day in the divine science of contentment. fore entering on the subject, we observe, that the word translated tap in our text, should rather be rendered bosom, as it is in Ruth iv. 16, Psal. lxxxix. 50, &c. It was on meeting in an old translation with the passage thus rendered, "The lot is cast into the bosom, &c.," that it opened to our minds as we propose to treat it for the comfort of the Lord's people to-day. The direct reference appears to be to the loose upper part of the oriental dress. which being tightly confined round the waist by a girdle, formed a depository for valuables - a substitute for a pocket. Whence it became customary, to speak of the bosom as a secure place. In it also—being capacious—women carried their children, as Ruth iv. 16. a shepherd a newly-born lamb; whence it became emblematical also of a place of sweet repose, and of the most intimate, tender, and endeared affection. Thus Lazarus was in the bosom of Abraham, and Jesus in the bosom of the Father, (John i. 18).

The subject presents itself to us in two points of view. First, as it refers to God. His lot is cast into the bosom. Secondly, as it refers to the Church, Her lot is cast into the bosom. And in both cases the whole disposing of the lot is of the Lord.

We consider, first, then, the lot as referring to God Himself, and it has two significations. First, a decision; secondly, a portion or inheritance.

This lot then, as a lot of decision, was first cast into the bosom by God the Father, as we read in Eph. i. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things [margin] in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Here was the lot cast into the bosom of the eternal covenant, and that covenant is Christ; as it is written, "I Jehovah have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles," (Isa. xhi. 6). How precious the testimony for each little lamb in the fold of the great Shepherd, who comes up to the enquiry with a living desire in his heart, to know, that when this wonderful lot was cast into the bosom, the same eternal Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the great witness of the covenant stood by, and recorded in the "Book of remembrance" (Mal. iii. 16), in "the Lamb's book of Life," every individual name who prevailed by virtue of this sacred lot to enter there, the same blessed Spirit is he who now "Beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." How?

By those inward upgoings of heart in longings after Christ, and by those constant "Groanings which cannot be uttered," by which himself the Spirit "maketh intercession for us" (Rom viii. 16, 26). Hence arises the blessedness of this first view of the Lot cast into the bosom. That as the Spirit was the witness for the Church in eternity past, he is, and delights to be, the witness in the several members of that church in their time-state now. Does any poor sinner enquire what is the first "sure token" of this witnessing? It is a deep heart-felt sense of need, the need of such a free and full salvation as that revealed to us in the Gospel, arising out of a full conviction of our utter ruin by sin.

"All the fitness He requireth,
Is to feel your need of Him;
This he gives you,
"Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

The let of decision then, cast into the bosom of the "Everlasting covenant" includes personal choice, and was the effect of personal and everlasting love. How for ever contented should I be, says a poor self-condemned sinner, could I know assuredly that I was cast personally into that Bosom of eternal blessedness at that great day of decision! The Lord help thee then to come with us again to look at this lot,

Secondly, as the Portion, the inheritance of God. We now contemplate the greatest wonder of time or of eternity, that He, who is described in that astonishing combination of wisdom, power, majesty, and glory, set forth in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, should declare that to be especially His chosen portion, which is made up of the poorest, neediest, most helpless beings, according to their own feelings, which have been called into existence by His almighty power. But thus it hath pleased Him to magnify the riches of His matchless grace. Our object in throwing out this hint here is, that, as we go on in our contemplation of this redeemed portion, each feeble one may have the precious heart-consoling fact present in the mind, that it is to such only the Lord looks as to his portion. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath my hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," (Isa. lxvi. 1, 2). "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; But God hath chosen the foolish things

the weak

the base

the despised

yea, and things which are not [in their own estimation] to bring to nought things which are" (I Cor. i. 26—28). Hence then, those very things which Satan and our unbelieving hearts point to, day by day, as so many marks of unfitness in us to hold or to hope for that blessed station to which our desires are now aspiring, are, in fact, the badges by which the Holy Ghost hast said, the Lord's portion is to be distinguished in the midst of a world of professors and profane, who are lying in the wicked one.

"For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 9); not Jacob naturally, for at the best of times with Jacob as a nation, it was but a remnant of Israel that came within the sacred bounds of the election of grace. It is the spiritual Israel, a little living band of "strangers and pilgrims"—" of whom the world is not worthy"—who " seek a country;" who, though living in the world, are not of the world; who, though sinners in themselves, are called to be saints in Christ Jesus, who, though from the daily workings of the law of sin in their members (Rom. vii. 23), are often ashamed to look up; "yet God is not ashamed to be be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." He looks upon them, not as they appear to themselves and others in their journey homewards, torn with thorns, worn with fatigue, disguised in "the body of this death," pale and fearful often, lest the "lion and the adder" should prevail. No. But he delights in his portion as he looks at their portraits, hanging in the fair halls of their eternal mansions, as they will appear in their royal robes, with their golden crowns, and golden harps, their never-fading palm-branches of victory, their fine linen clean and white, when they shall awake up in the likeness of Him "who is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person;" as they shall appear on that glorious morning, amidst the choruses of welcome that shall introduce that day which shall know no clouds, and the rising of that sun which sets The great God and our Saviour shall come forth with the Bride adorned for Her husband, "That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 27). It is thus Jehovah delights to behold his lot, his portion, his inheritance; and, thus beholding the church, he exclaims, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." Cheer up, poor trembling little "worm Jacob," thy princely portrait is even now worn upon the heart of thy glorious Husband! Then let the pilgrims sing

"Nor can he cease to love,
"Tis Jesu's precept this:
Ye husbands love your wives,
And will not Christ love his?
Shall others cherish and refresh
And Jesus hide from his own flesh?

Oh no! Christ loves his church
His glory 'tis to bless
He cannot love her more!
Nor will he love her less:
In his sight fair, cleansed by his word,
A Bride adorned for her Lord."

It is this sweet and soul-sustaining view of our value to Jehovah, as the portion upon which He has set his eternal affections indeed of whom it may now be said concerning his Church, as was said of Jacob concerning his Benjamin." His life is bound up in the lad's life." It is this view which opens up to us the depths of the mystery contained in that grand testimony of the apostle Paul's (Eph. i. 18), "and what the riches of the glory of HIS inheritance in the saints!" The subject presents itself to our minds in a view so far above all we can express of astonishing blessedness, that we can only venture to add a hint upon it. What must be the greatness of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, when we consider that the Eternal Word has taken into indissoluble union with Himself our own nature: that in that nature He may have eternal communion, delight, and glory, in and with His saints? which could not have been, had He remained separate and distinct in nature from His Church. Let us here remark that it seems to have been the climax of the Apostle's desire in his prayer for the beloved Ephesian church, that they might be so blessedly illuminated by the Spirit, as to arrive at the knowledge of this glorious stronghold of the eternal certainty of the redemption of their bodies, and their glorification with Him; who, that he might have a LOT—a "HELP-MEET" called time into existence, and made the worlds "that He might gather together in one, all things in Christ;" and mark, not in Christ as God only; but as God-MAN: Immanuel, God with us. Where is the world? its riches, its honours, its pleasures, or its sorrows, its afflictions, its crosses? Where? Hold it up, in either

of its phases, where is the world? A MOMENTARY BUBBLE when compared to this ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY! And yet to-morrow morning will find some of us, even those who have a good hope through grace, looking at time-things with as much earnest anxiety as though they were to last for ever. "Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe!" But again, cheer up! There is eternal security provided for "THE LOT."

It is cast into THE BOSOM. We have already pointed out that this Bosom is no less than our most glorious Christ, into whom the Church was cast in the covenant settlements before all worlds, as it is so blessedly expressed by the dear Apostle of the Gentiles in the Ephesians, as before quoted—"Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, or things, in Christ, according as He hath chosen us IN Him before the foundation of the world; that we should be holy and without blame before Him- at all times, under all states of experience, in the depths or on the heights, in sorrow or in joy, in life or in death]-"IN LOVE." Here is the untouchable security of the Church in her union to Jesus, by this before-time grafting into him, the good olive tree. This is, however, seen more strongly marked by contrast. This same lot, together with the mass of mankind, so far as her moral standing was concerned, was cast into the bosom of "the first man who was of the earth, earthy." And there all became a wreck, she sinned, and "the wages of sin is death," she died; and in death must have been eternally buried, but that she had even then another life, a spiritual, eternal life, "hid with Christ in God." Therefore, although she lost all that was cast with her into the bosom of Adam the first, having previously had a life and being in Adam the second—"The second Man who is the Lord from heaven"—she rises again in "newness of life," and is made a partaker of the first resurrection, among those who are called, "Blessed and holy, over whom the second death hath no power."

In this Bosom she finds "EVERLASTING STRENGTH" (Isa. xxvi. 4). "And"—says Christ—"I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any ENEMY [either Satan, sin, or the world; man as supplied by our translation, is far too weak] pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me [or cast them in my bosom] is greater than all; and no power is able to pluck them out of my father's hand. I and my Father are one!" (John x. 28, 29). Behold here, the blessedness of the whole subject, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John xvii. 23); that is, I in them, they in my bosom, and myself in thy bosom; as it is written, "No man hath seen God

at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18). A being and a pedigree founded on such holy principles as these, will make a man live well, walk well, and die well; and go on day by day singing, "The lot is cast into the lap, and the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

THE DISPOSING of every circumstance connected with this inheritance or lot, is wholly of the Lord. Hence springs the sweet glowings of true contentment, when we become more fully instructed into the gracious regulations by which all things work together for our good. We know the various parts of the system in our judgments, but we do not look at them in their blessed combinations. We know that our God is love. We know that He is We know that He is power. We know that foolishness. is bound in the heart of a child. We know that "the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. xxii. 15). We know that "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that we cannot do the things that we would" (Gal. v. 17). We know that the carnal mind—even in ourselves—is enmity against God: therefore quarrelling with Him at every step in His all-wise and all-gracious disposings. We know the world or the things of it, time and its trifles, are not our rest, they are polluted. We know that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. We know that "the preparations for disposings—margin of the heart in man. and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." other like spiritual axioms are ever present in our minds; and yet, because we cannot look at them as one grand whole, as so many wheels within wheels, all turning upon one grand axis, namely, LOVE; we are day by day writing bitter things against ourselves, because that part of the wheel we in our folly would have uppermost, is down in the mire! Nevertheless, although we continue so dull in our spiritual perceptions, it is a rich mercy to have the heart well established in this simple truth, that the working together for good, of all the adverse things, which, under the wise and Almighty disposings of our covenant God, are daily troubling us, does not in any degree rest upon our acquiescence in the various dispensations through which we are called to pass.

"Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price," stands as a daily answer to all our questionings respecting the propriety of the way in which we are led. And since we are not our own, and not at our own disposal, the responsibility of the whole matter

rests with the Mighty One who bought us. His design in all the disposings of His lot is to secure his own eternal glory, and His matchless wisdom cannot err in choosing means to this one great end. Out of this arises the revelation to our souls of our interest in all the glorious things contained in the covenant of grace. Because we belong to Christ, and are the lot of his inheritance, from which he is to derive His glory throughout the eternal ages; therefore in His love, in his wisdom, and in his almighty power, he has disposed every circumstance connected with our time-state in grace. as well as our unfading blessedness in eternal glory. By his disposings we find our place as members in the one redeemed body, as living stones in the holy temple. By his disposings every event in our little life is regulated, both in temporals and spirituals. The very moment when each purchased one shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live. The degree and duration of the first teachings by which each child of God is brought down into the dust of self-helplessness, and made willing to receive mercy without money and without price. The precise moment when the veil should be taken away, and the trembling sin-condemned one should see the smile on the lip, and hear the tender voice of pardon instead. of the expected "depart ye," from their elder Brother. The nature of every exercise, the numbers and kind of crosses for each succeeding day, the heat of the furnace, the strength of the temptation, the depth of the flood, the intensity of every bitter; every ray from the sun, every plunge in the fountain, every banquet of wine, every draught of the brook, every drop of the oil of joy, every garment of praise, every shout of victory, and every step in the dance, down to the Jordan of death,—as more fully set forth in the next lecture, is at the disposal of Him who delights to call this lot his own.

THE LOT CAST INTO THE LAP.

No. 2.

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."—Prov. xvi. 33.

WE commenced our former lecture on this subject, by remarking on the astonishing folly of the manifest proneness of the children of God to discontent. We there refer to those of the Lord's people, who, by the teaching of the Spirit, are brought to a settled point, as to their eternal interest in the blessings of the covenant of grace.

It is not a matter for surprise, that those who are beginning to feel the deep movements of spiritual life in their souls, should be constantly filled with discontent, since it is the inevitable tendency of the mind of one in whose heart the light of life is just dawning, to conclude that almost every circumstance connected with their temporal position and lot is opposed to the attainment of that which thenceforward, their hearts are craving; namely, growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as their own Lord and Saviour. They have discovered to their dismay, that there is not a sound timber in the little bark, in which they had been so securely floating down the stream of time, they know not how soon it may break up, and themselves perish: they therefore count all things but loss, that they may reach the "Rock of ages"-" That they may win Christ, and be found in Him." Hence they adopt every expedient that presents itself; changing communions, seeking peace in ordinances, but all outward things leave them discontented still. And so must they remain discontented with their religion, discontented with their prayers, discontented with self, and all things short of the attainment of that glorious hope which is now set before them; towards which, like the Apostle, they are daily "pressing;" yes, discontented until they are sweetly brought to discover that their eternal lot was cast THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 8.

into the bosom in that covenant, ordered in all things and sure; in which to the everlasting astonishment and delight of the Church, it pleased the glorious Covenanters to determine that thus it should stand in immutable blessedness. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John xvii. 21). Who shall measure "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," of that love and wisdom by which this lot was given as an unchangeable decision, appointing our glorious portion, casting all into the infinite bosom of Jesus, the "Covenant of the people;" disposing all for them; not only during their little pilgrim-journey, but extending "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills" (Gen. xlix. 26). We now contemplate these four points in reference to the Church of God. Her "lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

The decision by which the lot of the Church was eternally appointed, is sweetly spoken of by the psalmist; "He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob, whom He loved" (Psal. xlvii. 4). Dost thou not see, poor fearful one, that it is the Lord's decision, and not thine? Thou art afraid thy decisions will lead thee astray! Be comforted, the lot was long, very long ago, settled for thee: thy fickle, changeful mind, and heart, are not consulted in it; all that thou hast to do in the matter of decision respecting this most glorious lot, is folded up in those precious words, "My people shall be willing in the day of my power." When the constraining power begins to operate, then there is no longer any difficulty as to our deciding about our lot; our only fear then is, lest we obtain not that which we decide to be, above all things, the one sole object of our desire. "That I may know Him!" But little faith trembles; sin, the world, the flesh, the devil, seem, as a strong army, to stand in the way of our decision for God. And so according to the flesh, they ever will, and must. Let us observe why. That we may be brought to a practical knowledge of that declaration of the Apostle's (Phil. iii. 3), "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit [not with will or fleshly worship], and rejoice in Christ JESUS [not in our fleshly decision], and have no confidence in the flesh." There is much said in this day of universal profession about "A decided character"—" Decidedly pious," &c. But however good the moral fruits of this highly-exalted decision may be, if it stands not in the power of God, having the life of God as its root, every blossom will fade, and all its fruit with every branch, will wither in the solemn hour of death. It is one thing to see

clearly in the natural understanding, the beauty and advantages of religion, and therefore, to decide for God; and it is altogether another matter to be "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. ii. 10). The tendency of the former, is to self-complacency. The inevitable effect of the latter, is self-abasement; and the daily knowledge in heart-feeling of that living spiritual cry of the Apostle's, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24). whose heart is not daily crushed under a feeling sense of the burden of this body of death, let him boast himself either in doctrine or piety, cannot be spiritually alive. The whole Bible testimony goes to prove this; and Paul, who, while he thus cried out, could joy in God, and say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord"—declares (2 Cor. v. 4), "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." None but spiritually-living men can feel spiritual burdens, and such feel them press heavily indeed. To these the burden is a reality, and compels them to groan; and not the mere effect of fleshly natural conviction, which suggests that it is our duty These remarks will produce directly opposite effects in the minds of the dead religionists, and those who are truly born from above. The one will inwardly gnash their teeth upon the edge of the axe which is laid at the root of their profession, while every living seeker of Jesus will sigh and say, "I fear mine is only duty groaning;" nevertheless, these will instantly rush in heart to the light, that all may be made manifest, crying out, "Search me, oh God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24). To these living ones we delight to say then, "Fear not, although thou mayest have been long seeking the Lord, sorrowing, thy lot of decision is cast into the bosom of eternal love, to be brought forth when the time appointed shall be fulfilled:" and thus stands the sacred blessedness of this unalter-"The vision is yet for an appointed time [nor can it be hastened], but at the end [of the night of sorrow], it shall speak (by the Spirit's precious revelation of Jesus to the soul), and not lie. [For He is faithful who hath promised] though it tarry [until the hour of decision], wait for it; because [seeing it is cast into the bosom], it will surely come, it will not tarry" one moment beyond that blessed hour decided upon as most suitable by wisdom which cannot err.

This decision includes, as in a map and its record or key, the entire pilgrim's journey of every child of God. But we have to

wait for the daily unfolding scenes, not knowing what an hour may bring forth. We have this, however, to console us in the midst of that "jeopardy every hour," in which so many of the Lord's poor nervous ones are standing—that all our own past projected maps of coming devastations and warfare, inundations and earthquakes, have proved to be libels upon the loving-kindness which has ever been hitherto doing for us "all things well." And He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

The lot as A PORTION, secures to us a never failing and abundant supply of all riches in grace, for the little journey, and an eternal

weight of glory in our mansion-home.

King David in his three-fold character as a type of Christ, a sweet prophet in Israel, and a beloved member of the mystical body of Christ, sings blessedly of this portion in the sixteenth psalm, "The Lord [Jehovah] is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot." And Jeremiah in his Lamentations (chap. iii. 24), overwhelmed as he was in his distresses, could sing the same song, "The Lord [Jehovah] is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him." Herein stands the great blessedness of our new creatureship in Christ Jesus; that while (as we pointed out in last lecture), the Church in her eternally-living union to Jesus, is Jehovah's portion; so, by virtue of the same bond of union, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is made over by covenant engagement, confirmed by an immutable oath, folded up in exceeding great and precious promises, sealed by Immanuel's blood, and revealed by the Eternal Spirit in due time, as the everlasting portion of the Church. The reality in its fulness, never can be comprehended by a finite mind; no thoughts, no words, especially of ours, can wade more than ancle-deep on the shores of the fathomless ocean of blessedness, until mortality is swallowed up of life; even, then the height of everlasting joys will be, to be lost in the possession of, and in being ourselves possessed by, this ever-glorious portion. It will be then that we shall begin to learn the ever-unfolding greatness, grandeur, and majesty, of the lot and the lap, the portion and the bosom wherein alone this marvellous lot is to be found.

We know many will spurn from them the idea of thus speaking of the great Eternal, as in the Persons of the glorious Trinity, making themselves over as the portion of insignificant men. But "let God be true, and every man a liar," because philosophical professors, proud in scientific attainments, choose to call our conclusions "fanatical exaggerations;" are we to forsake the company of Paul the tent-maker, and Peter and John the fishermen, and join

the "wise and prudent" in their contempt of the Babes? (Luke x. 21). We cheerfully admit, that as men are in themselves, "The nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." Not so, however, that glorious Church as she stands in union to her living Head, "the fulness of Him who filleth all in all"—as she stands "created in Christ Jesus," no words are strong enough to describe her glory and blessedness. John saw her How does he describe her? though not yet in her ultimate "A great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet." But these soul-elevating realities involve certain doctrines which still constitute the offence of the cross of Christ; nor can the "carnal mind" of man, however refined, dwell upon these things without feeling the risings of enmity against God, as the eternal portion of an elect people; and against that elect remnant as the fore-known and fore-ordained portion of her God in covenant. Nevertheless, in this lot will we rejoice, while we can trace, also involved in it, two glorious testimonies; one as our stay here, the other our expected and much desired salutation, when we raise our head above the waters on the Canaan side of the Jordan. This is our watch-word and stay now; since Jehovah is our portion, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 22). And our salutation when we step over the threshold of our mansion above, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34).

But the majority of the Lord's dear children are not brought to a settled point in their souls, respecting their own individual interest in this portion. They believe the doctrine, but are daily most deeply exercised in their hearts, lest any mistake should lead them to settle down in fleshly security, crying peace, peace, where God has not spoken peace. That earnestness which proceeds from true spiritual life in the soul, cannot be satisfied with anything short of Divine revelation, the demonstration of the Spirit. Any testimony below this, is not enough to venture upon in the matters connected with eternity. The question then will arise continually, "How am I to know that this glorious Portion is mine?" The Lord help you to observe, that in this eternal Lot or Portion, "the Three that bear record in heaven"—the Comforter, the Witness of the Church is included, whose province, in the covenant of grace, it is, to bear witness moment by moment in every renewed heart, that such axe

passed from death unto life, and shall not come into condemnation (John v. 24). The Father's eternal love and choice, the Son's eternal love and redemption, stand as the inestimable portion of the Church, irrespective of the frames and feelings of the individual members of that Church. Nevertheless, the possession is by the "sealing of the Spirit;" as we read Eph. i. 13, "In whom also, after that we believed we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." Observe now, in nature. a dead child has no part or lot in the family inheritance; it is the living child. Even in his youngest babyhood, what is it that constitutes the earnest of his inheritance? What is it that makes him the heir to the portion? it is being a living child. How is he known to be alive? He breathes—vea, though it be but panting. "I opened my mouth and panted," says David; He is still the heir, because he is alive. He cries, he hungers, and thirsts, he cleaves to the maternal bosom. Nothing in the wide world can give him quiet, but the consolation he finds there. Then, "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2). And the Lord help thee to perceive that every living desire is a spiritual sealing with the Holy Ghost, and a blessed earnest of the lot or portion which is cast into the bosom: the eternal good-will of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The bosom of Christ, as the safe depository of the portion, is most blessed when we connect the power, the perfections, and the love of his Person, with the interest He has in the Church, as the object of his supreme delight, and the eternal lot of his inheritance. It is with a mind full of wonder at the condescension of the sacred design, that we add, that having bound up his future glory in the welfare and happiness of his Church, how secure must be all the provisions for the attainment of that glory and welfare in his omnipotent hands! Yes, extending to the persons of each member of the Church, including their teaching here, and their glorification with Himself. Whatever the charges of the warfare through which each one has to be brought, the amount of pardon, the duration of long-suffering, the needed mercy, the daily strength, all is to be found cast into the dear bosom of his love, in which ourselves, by virtue of living union, have been "raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly things, in Christ Jesus." Hence flows the

closing blessedness of the text.

"The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord;" and here is worked out the grand design in its multiplicity of parts, including every step, however intricate and perplexing, both in providence

and grace here, up to final glory hereafter. We received Christ Jesus as little children; the apostle Paul exhorts, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Does the little babe complain, because he is clothed in blue, or white, or scarlet, and sometimes in mourning? Does he repine, because he spends more time in the nursery, than the drawing-room? No. How is it, then, we so often break the apostolical rule, and murmur over our mercies? The truth is, we want to have a hand in the disposing of things; we think a little more sunshine, a little more daylight, more insight into the future, a lighter heart, a smoother path, a stronger arm, a swifter foot, a less powerful enemy, greater control over the flesh, sweeter access in prayer, a larger amount of communion, stronger faith, a brighter hope, and a more abiding sense of love, would be better for us. It is all a mistake, it must be so; because infinite wisdom, guided by infinite love, and supported by infinite power, is disposing ALL; and has said, with regard to the whole. "ALL THINGS work together for good to them that love God." Therefore to suppose that one thing, be it what it may, could be disposed more for the glory of God, and the true blessedness of the children of God, is infidelity. What a boundless grace it is then, seeing we are so daily full of this infidelity, that one of the glorious characteristics of our covenant God is, that He is "keeping mercy for thousands" of such rebels!

Manifestation, Preservation, and Perseverance, are the three

great ends accomplished by the disposings of the Lord.

Manifestation begins with a gradual opening up of self in all its deformities and enormities, which covers the soul with shame, terror, and confusion, which opens the way for the full exhibition of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, thus expressed, "For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them" (Isa. lxi. 7). This is repeated in manifestation again and again; but where there is no shame, there is no "double;" where no confusion, there is no "joy in the portion." In the midst of all the disposings, however much sorrow may fill the heart, thus stands the promise, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice."

Preservation stands again in the Lord's precious promise, connected with his wonderful disposings, "The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous" (Psal. cxxv. 3). The rod means a sceptre, signifying ruling power. The blessed Disposer of ail power has said, "Grace shall reign, sin shall not have the do-

minion;" therefore, however much sin may work in the flesh, fear not, The sceptre of wickedness shall not REST upon the lot of the righteous. David and Peter experienced the blessed presevering power of this promise, and can we not say the sceptre of wickedness is broken?

And now to sum up all the disposings of the Lord in one concluding testimony, which, as a line of admonition, such as that which our dear Lord Jesus gave to Peter when he was interfering with his wise disposings of things, "What is that to thee? follow thou me!" might well be our daily watch-word, sealing our final perseverance. "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. xii. 13). This sweetly secures all, and when spoken by the Spirit with power in the heart.

" Makes mercy sweet, salvation great, And all God's judgments right."

THE FRIEND OF GOD.

(James ii. 23.)

Wherever the love of God is shed abroad in a man's heart, there "brotherly love continues," and in nothing is this brotherly affection more strongly marked, than in the constant outgoing of desire concerning "those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble," that their hearts may be comforted, and that by the Spirit's teaching, their spiritual minds may be raised above the daily passing trifles connected with fading-time, whether those trifles give pleasure or pain, so that their thoughts and affections may be concentrated on that one point of eternal blessedness, their unchanging and unalterable standing in union to, and perfection in, the Person of our most glorious Christ, "Complete in Him!" Every thought that is not aiming at this, falls short of Paul's "mark;" towards which He was daily pressing with a fixed and single eye, and an outstretched-neck, exhibiting the earnestness with which he ran the race set before him, "looking unto Jesus."

With this one object in view, that we may "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," we look up for the precious anointings of the Spirit, while we contemplate the blessedness of being "The friend of God!" Who shall estimate the value and the dignity of such a friendship? We must not here be contented to measure by the formal and fashionable friendships of the world, which often have no root in the heart; but rather read the sweet words of our text, as the parallel passage to that in Isaiah xli. 8, which may more properly be read, "Abraham my lover." What a love! an infinite, eternal, unchanging love! Who, or what, shall disturb a friendship based on such a love? and "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.

We love Him, because He first loved us "(1 John iv. 10, 19).

Beloved, does a sigh burst from thy heart? art thou fearful that so great a grace cannot be the portion and property of one so poor, so wavering, so cold-hearted, so unworthy as thyself? The Lord [The Gospel Cottage Lectures, No. 9.

help thee to come with us into a brief enquiry into the nature of this friendship; first glancing for a moment at the parties concerned in it.

"The Mighty God! The Everlasting Father! The Prince of Peace!" from eternity has had his thoughts occupied with this friendship; and his delights have consisted in making provision for his friends. He built the universe, as a suitable place, in which to call into being those with whom he had determined to enter into eternal friendship. In the infinite wisdom of his divine mind. having made his first friend, and, as their natural Head, all his long line of friends in Him; He suffered the whole mass to fall into open rebellion against Himself. Then, in the fulness of time, He came forth, as a friend who delighted to "show Himself friendly " (Prov. xviii. 24): taking into eternal union with his Godhead. the very nature—without its contracted corruption—which had fallen into sin. By which marvellous act of condescension, Immanuel, God with us, has rendered it henceforth necessary to his own eternal happiness, that He find among those whose nature He has thus made his own, a society of companions (Song viii. 13), with whom He may enjoy eternal fellowship.

Thus then stand the parties to this wonderful friendship, which shall be the admiration of boundless ages to come. Jesus Christ

the Mighty God, and rebel, hell-deserving man!

Knowledge is the first step to friendship. The friends of God are brought to know him by a thousand varied lines of teaching. Some are led on almost imperceptibly, step by step, in the divine knowledge of Jesus; his Person, work, and blessed suitability, to become the friend of the otherwise friendless sinner; until by degrees, Christ rises so high in the renewed affections, as to eclipse all other things; vea. even heaven itself, so that the daily language of the soul becomes "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." This, however, cannot be attained but by the personal teaching of the Spirit, and is always accompanied by a daily warfare, which embitters all things short of Jesus to the soul. If any man thinks he is living here, and yet is a stranger to Paul's thorn in the flesh, he may be very religious, but, for all that, he is certainly out of the secret. All God's friends are daily suitable to Christ, and Christ and his precious grace. the only daily suitable things to them. Again, others of God's friends are suffered to go for a long season, through a series of steps, in mere theoretical knowledge of Christ, and salvation, as set forth in the written word; taking it for granted they are secure in their profession: having a name that they live, yet are dead (Rev.

iii. 1). It does not follow that these are unsound in doctrine, they may not be professed Pharisees to need the same line of teaching by which Paul was brought to know the Lord. While in this profession without power (1 Cor. iv. 20), they hear of Christ, but to say they love Him, is not true: for where true love is, the person must be seen or heard from; and especially where this divine love is, not an hour passes, but the renewed heart is going out in earnest yearning-desires, after fresh living testimonies of the undying love of a precious Christ, to that individual soul. General love will not satisfy the yearnings of this divine fellowship; it must be personal revelations in communion. Since the prevailing features of the religion of the day are of this cold character, polished it is true. but glowing only with outward zeal, and not with inward fire of love to Jesus only; the Lord has his processes by which He brings every friend of his, out from among this "mixed multitude" to a knowledge of Himself. Perhaps in Satan's sieve, they learn to their dismay, that a mere profession without grace, is no protection against outward gross sin, where Satan is permitted to sift as wheat, even a friend of God! Or it may be by an Almighty voice—some affliction, or overwhelming circumstance—and a light above the brightness of the sun, shining in the heart. These are brought, first to a knowledge of themselves, as Paul was, and the hollowness of their profession, and then by after-teaching, to a knowledge of the fulness, and suitability of all grace, which is treasured up in Christ the sinner's Friend. Again, a very general course pursued by the Lord, towards his friends, is that which Joseph pursued towards his brethren. He meets them in providence, or in his word and ordinances, or by the application of his law in its spirituality, as reaching to their thoughts, as a man of a hard countenance, and speaks roughly, or hard things with them, as though He were about to destroy, until He brings them to fall down at his feet in helpless bondage, confessing their sins from the very depth of an affected heart; they then know themselves to be lost indeed, unless they can find mercy, or a deliverer. When to their eternal astonishment, the smile of friendship lights up the brow of their Judge, and he who had appeared to be their greatest enemy, tenderly whispers to them, "I am Joseph thy brother!" It is true they still tremble; it is true they still weep; but joy now mingles with their sorrows; hope springs into life, out of the ashes of despair; love trembles on the lip; and true repentance feeds the fountain of grief within, while they remember their baseness towards one who now sweetly mingles the tears of sympathy, with those of his broken-hearted friends. Oh, what a friendship! Immortal, glorious, and true. · Agreement, is another essential to true fellowship: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos iii, 3). "And Enoch walked with God "(Gen. v. 24). But Enoch was a sanner like ourselves. How then could he walk with God? Paul tells us (Heb. xii. 5) "By faith Enoch was translated before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." "But without faith it is impossible to please Him;" Enoch, therefore walked by faith. But where? In that way where a convicted sinner, and a righteous God, can alone meet and walk together: "Jesus said unto him, I am the way" (John xiv. 6), and here there is a blessed and eternal agreement, God the Father has testified of Jesus the Way. "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and when the sensible sinner receives through the Spirit's testimony in his renewed heart, unconditional pardon, eternal justification, and the imputation of spotless righteousness, he too can go forth in this new and living way, "well pleased" to meet the Father of mercies there, and to bow the head in sacred adoration and wonder that he should be called "the friend of God."

Faith is another essential in the compound of a true friendship. The Apostle James connects this with our text. "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God." There must be faith in the sincerity of our friend.

"Ah could I but believe, All things would easy be."

Thus sighs little faith, and adds, moreover, "But I have not a doubt about God's sincerity, all my fear is about my own. If I could but believe myself to be a true believer, I should be satisfied." Was this the faith Abraham had, which proved that he was a friend of God? Was it faith in his own faithfulness? Was it not rather faith in the faithfulness of Him who had promised? What says the word? What did Abraham believe in? In the probabilities of the case, or in anything depending on himself? No. But altogether "against hope he believed." What? That which God had spoken. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith [or as good master Tyndale more correctly renders it, "was made strong in the faith;" for Abraham had no more power over faith than we have], giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able to perform "(Rom. iv.

1

18-21). The Lord help his dear "feeble-minded" friends to look at the true state of the case. There is a combination of difficulties standing in the way of each of God's true friends, on this important point of faith. To a mere professor of Christianity, to believe that all is right, and that they are believers and will go to heaven, is as easy as it is for those to believe they are rich, and have need of nothing, who can count over their surplus thousands in the Bank. But it is not so easy a matter for a living child of God to believe all is right, who, by the light of life shining in his heart, has discovered what a monster he is by nature, under all the tinsel of outward morality; especially now that Satan, having discovered the new bent of the "quickened" sinner's heart, labours day and night, to stir up the foul dregs of corrupt nature; while at the same time, the desiring one has exhibited to his mind, in ever-magnifying proportions, those immortal glories which are prepared for the friends of God, which tends to excite the more intense longing in his soul after a "clear title" to such an inherit-Thus the greatness of the salvation on the one hand, and felt utter-unworthiness on the other, weighed in the deceitful scales of carnal reason, instead of the balances of the sanctuary, keep many of the Lord's friends at a distance from Him, writing bitter things against themselves, even for years together. More especially powerful, are these clogs on the wings of little faith, whenas is very generally the case with the friends of God—either a weak and frail body, a boisterous or a sickly family, some powerful persecutor, or sneering companion, extreme temporal poverty, the worm at the root of every gourd, worldly entanglements, an irritable temper, or a fretful disposition, in combination with the spiritual exercise, daily depresses and distracts the bewildered mind. Satan, as the accuser of the brethren, taking advantage of these things, ever takes his stand at the right hand of the trembling Joshua as he bows before the Lord (Zech. iii. 1), to resist the feeble efforts of little-faith, as he wrings his hands in sorrow, crying, oh, could I but believe! The truth of the matter is, that in the midst of all this wavering, and staggering in feeling, each truly living one, is as much a believer as was Abraham, only they lack the "joy of faith" (Phil. i. 25). We are apt, however, to measure the extent of our graces, and indeed sometimes to determine their very existence, by the joy we feel in the exercise of them. Nevertheless this alters nothing in the Lord's account, and be it never forgotten, He is our Judge. How was it in the case of the poor distracted father with his raving son? (Mark ix. 23, 24),

How exactly does this poor man's language, and deportment, set forth the deep exercises of an earnest coming sinner. He had heard of the wonders Christ had done, he had tried his disciples but in vain, at last he breaks out, as he presses into the presence of Jesus: "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Observe here, the dear man's unbelief, extended even to the ability of Christ to help, yet he succeeded! "Jesus saith unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straitway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief." How then are we to measure the man's faith? by its extent in operation, its joy; or firmness? No. But by its effects. "It obtained the promise;" yea, more, the fulfilment too. Here is our mistake, in attempting to measure faith by feeling. The properties of each are distinct: as well may we attempt to compute the quantities of light by pounds and ounces. We are, however, ever prone to this folly of judging of our faith by feeling. Abraham believed what God had spoken to him. And dost not thou believe what God has spoken to thee, poor sinner? are not his words most precious and suitable? listen then once more; "Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest " (Matt. xi. 28). Art thou labouring to enter into his rest? Art thou heavy ladened, groaning, "Oh, wretched man that I am?" Art thou longing, looking, crying, desiring? Then thou art going to Him, and He cannot deny himself, for he has said "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise [how great a word is this no wise] cast out." Thou couldest not feel sin a burden, excepting the Spirit had convinced thee of sin, this is God's teaching, as "It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father [says Christ] cometh unto me" (John vi. 45). How? In desire, by simple faith. Believing [not in ourselves, that we are believers, but in Christ], that "What He had promised, He was able to perform " (Rom. iv. 21). Therefore as Abraham was, so is each little faith, "called the Friend of God."

Intimate communion is the privilege of true friendship. Until we attain to the enjoyment of this most blessed prerogative of the friends of God, although we may be perfectly safe as to our salvation, yet the present joys of that salvation are not our daily delight. That we are not to be satisfied with any attainments short of the rejoicings arising out of intimate communion, appears throughout the word, especially in the Psalms, Solomon's Song, and

the Epistles, in which we often read of glorying and rejoicing in the Lord. Yea, Peter goes a step higher than simple rejoicing, calling it (1 Pet. i. 8), "Joy unspeakable, and full of glory." We are not, however, to expect this joy to the exclusion of the daily cross, the daily warfare, the thorn in the flesh, and many and varied exercises, for observe what Peter connects this unspeakable joy with, "Wherein ve greatly rejoice, though now for a season. if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations." Indeed when the Lord, the Spirit, has sweetly opened the secret blessedness of this eternal friendship to the renewed mind, all temptations, afflictions, and bondage-feelings, tend but to heighten the glories of intimate communion. But there is a teaching needed before the Lord's friends come fully to the apprehension of this unspeakable joy: they must be taught a little of the foundation upon which the friendship rests on God's side. That it is not upon what poor helpless sinners are in themselves, but, upon what Christ is to God the Father, upon what God has given his friends in Christ, upon what God has made Christ to them, upon what Christ himself has done for them, and upon what God the Holy Ghost has wrought in them. It is as these great and blessed mysteries of the Gospel are brought, by the Spirit's teaching, clearly before the illuminated eye of faith, and as Paul's prayer for his Ephesian brethren is answered in us, that we sweetly enter upon communion. As it is written, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. i. 17, 18). Here they begin to enter upon that fellowship of which John speaks (1 John i. 3), " And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

It is thus then, when the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of a precious Christ, is given in all its mind-elevating power, to a poor troubled, tempest-tossed, friend of God, that he begins to find his chief delight in counting over, and dwelling upon the immortal links in the glorious covenant-chain, which makes his friendship what it is; untouchable, unchangeable, eternal! he begins with the love of God the Father to Christ, "Thou loved'st me before the foundation of the world;" and joins with this that other golden link, "And hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me" (John xvii. 23, 24). Well may we sing while we gaze

on these glorious testimonies-

"On such love my soul still ponder,
Love so great, so rich, so free,
Say, while lost in holy wonder,
Why, oh Lord, such love to me?
Hallelujah!
Grace shall reign eternally."

But while we contemplate this love, we come down another link in the mysterious chain: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places [or things] in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world " (Eph. i. 3), sweetly hanging on which follows another link, most precious, "But of Him are ve in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30): to which is joined those mysterious links of imputation, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). Again, link after link, travels downward through the time-fulfilment of the vast and sacred plan, until we arrive at those lowest links in the depths of humiliation, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do " (John xvii. 4). Joined again as it ascends in resurrection blessedness, "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). And again, "Thou hast ascended up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men" (Psal. xviii. 18); But, bless the Lord, it does not stop here. Once more, in dear fellowship, we trace the coming down again of the same glorious chain, link after link, in sweet soul-quickening testimony, by the eternal Comforter, until we come to that first development of divine friendship in spiritual manifestation in our own hearts. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word" (1 Pet. ii. 2). Now there is not a feeble lamb in all the fold but can lay hold of this precious link. The Lord help the desiring one to trace back again the chain, for if this one link be fastened round thy heart, poor trembling lamb, "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;" and thus we ascend again in precious fellowship, in eternal friendship, with our covenant God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST?

(No 1.)

" For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21.

THERE is nothing more common than to find the Lord's own heaven-born children struggling on from day to day, in the midst of conflicts within and cares without, almost entirely dwelling in their minds, upon their own most desperate unworthiness, the utter depravity of their hearts, and the constantly changing dispensations of sorrow and exercise through which they are called to pass, the latter of which they look upon as so many rods sent by the Lord to chastise them for their iniquities, short comings, hardness and coldness of heart, rebellions and unbelief.

Moreover, it is almost as common to find such positively priding themselves inwardly on their determination to take no comfort to themselves, saying, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him;" and secretly drawing a negative satisfaction from their sufferings; concluding they, at least, are peculiarly tender in conscience, and possess much of the fear of the Lord.

It is certainly not unkind to expose the fallacy of such reasonings, if at the same time by the Lord the Spirit's help we point out a " more excellent way."

Let us look then honestly at the source from which all this sort of self-chastisement flows. It is legal, and partakes of the nature of penance, and is certainly as full of sin as the things repented of, if not more so, since "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Faith has but one object to look upon, even Christ; therefore, whatever of penitence we experience which proceeds merely from a view of sin, is not that repentance which needeth not to be repented of. True

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 10:

penitence is always the effect of faith. The goodness of God as manifested in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus leadeth to repentance (Rom. ii. 4.)

"Nor is it such a dismal thing
As 'tis by some men named;
A sinuer may repent and sing,
Rejoice and be ashamed."

Let us examine for a moment the sort of use, which under such feelings, we make of Christ. We read of him as a hiding-place. And a blessed hiding place he is! But how do we in our experience use Him, or seek to use Him, as such? "Oh I am so black, I will hide myself behind Jesus, when I go to the throne; I will seek to draw the skirts of His Righteousness as a curtain to hide me from the gaze of "Him who sits upon the throne!" I am so vile, so black, I dare not look God in the face, I tremble as I approach Him! How can I venture near so great, so holy, so terrible a God?" Now this seems at first sight all very proper, all very right, does it not? It appears so truly humble and so truly meek! Yet there is a mistake at the bottom of all this cherished humility, which Satan, the ever active accuser of the brethren, is delighted to take advanvantage of; there is in it also, a little spark of self-love and selfesteem which he fans vigorously, that he may raise it into a selfrighteous flame of spiritual pride. Now the Lord help every truly living earnest child of His to mark particularly the value they set upon these feelings. There is a latent pleasure in holding fast these solemn feelings of self-abasement that leads to the conclusion that it is far more consistent for such an unworthy one to be thus always in the dust, than to be drinking at the fountain-head of blessedness, so sweetly, as to "forget his poverty and remember his misery no more." Nevertheless, unbelief is at the bottom of this determination to hold fast that which seems like integrity. Does a sigh burst from thy troubled heart, poor trembling one? Fear not! "He that shall come will come," not because thou art so penitent; but because the love of His heart "driveth" him towards thee, like Joseph's to his darling brother Benjamin.

"But" you will say again, "I cannot give it up, it is so proper that such a chief of sinners should go thus mourning all the day! Look at me! what a hard, cold, rebellious, ungrateful-hearted creature I am." "Ah," says one, "that is but the every day complaint." What, worse than that? does the blush of shame mount to the cheek at the ever-present remembrance of some foul spot upon the "filthy garments?" (Zech. iii. 3.) Still, fear not! If thy heart is broken—

if thy sorrows ever flow for this thy sin—the precious Gospel is full of good news to thee; and Paul, who claims the precedence in sinnership, says to thee, "rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I

say rejoice."

Poor troubled one! We know thy conflicts. For many long and dreary years were we daily seeking to draw consolations from these breasts of bitterness, until by precious teaching we were led to the fountain-fulness of all grace and blessedness in "Jesus only." Apart from all our own little drops of sorrow, in Him we found the sum total of our sorrows and our griefs for all our baseness for ever borne away. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. liii. 4.) What otherwise must yet be the solemn and eternal consequence? What are our moments of grief and sor row on account of sin here? There is no half-way salvation. He hath either borne all the hell of suffering due to us on account of our sins in His own sacred body and soul, or we must sink eternally under the ponderous weight thereof. Look, then, at the value—if you can measure an atom—of these cherished drops of sorrow! What are they really worth, when compared to that eternal fountain of wrath which our most glorious Christ, at one almighty draught, drank for ever dry? Is it honouring Him to be thus clinging to our own sorrows, rather than seeking daily to lift up our voices in songs of praise to Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own precious blood? If then it is dishonouring the Lord thus to cherish this species of melancholy, it cannot be so proper as on the surface it may appear to be.

Some will object, "But we have no power over our sorrows." This is perfectly true. But because we have no power over faith, that is no reason why we should nurse sinful unbelief. Again, others will enquire "But are not the footsteps of the flock to be sought for in a path of tribulation?" Most truly; and every child of God will be compelled to carry the cross daily until he reaches his crown. But this does not touch the question at issue. Paul solves the difficulty in these words, "as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing," (2 Cor. vi. 10.) This is the blessed point to which we so earnestly desire to attain! "But," another will add, "have you not often said that these very sorrows are evidences that we are passed from death unto life?" Yes, indeed. But what is the proper use of our evidences of spiritual life? To feed our gloom and misery, as if we were the most unhappy creatures on earth? No! But rather to lead our renewed minds out and up in the contemplation of those blessed eternal realities which belong to us if we are truly "boru

of God." Paul does not stop with his lamentation (Rom. vii. 24,) "O wretched man that I am!" but instantly draws from this evidence of spiritual life in his soul, those conclusions which caused him to burst forth in that giorious song of praise beginning with "I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord," and continued throughout the whole of the next chapter (Rom. viii.) This then is the "more excellent way" of using these spiritual tokens we desire to bring before the Lord's dear exercised people. Really to be able by faith to say, "to me to live is Christ," is very far beyond merely hiding behind Christ. It is to live in His life, and lose ourselves and all that we deplore in self, in an ever-comely Christ, and thus "changed into the same image," it is our daily priviledge to go with holy boldness to our God and Father, sweetly knowing that while we thus present ourselves before Him, "complete in Christ," if it were possible that He could say nay to our petition, He would not be rejecting us, but he would be rejecting His "well beloved Son." in whom He has declared He is "well pleased." But let us come to the enquiry, Do I live Christ? Paul did, as we shall see from our text.

Some read this passage as belonging to the previous verse, thus, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death, so that for me to live or to die is Christ's gain," since He is glorified in either case. But this is certainly not the simple spiritual import of the text, however true it may be in fact. Again, others read it thus, "In life or death Christ is my gain." This is a better reading and blessedly true, for in life He is the pearl of great price, and Himself, in his glorious person, work, and offices, the only true gain a poor sinner can find. He is all the salvation and all the desire of every "Son of peace," who has once caught a divine glimpse of this "Treasure hid in a field," and such an one will sell all that he hath to buy this pearl. How great a gain he will be in death we know not. But if now He brings heaven into the soul by His precious presence, what shall the gain be when he brings the soul into heaven to be glorified in His presence for ever more? Blessed, however, as this sense of the text is, there is a fulness in it even more glorious still. Thus read "To me to live is [for] Christ [to live] and to die is gain!" The Lord give strength to the trembling hand of little faith to lay hold of the blessed hope full of immortality contained therein.

The blessed apostle had known Saul—the base destroyer—and Paul—the noble worker—after the flesh; and his testimony, even concerning the heaven-born Paul was, "For I know that in me,

that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing (Rom. vii. 18.) "Wherefore," he says, "henceforth know we no man after the flesh." No. not even myself, not even Paul. Since I am a "new creature' in Christ, I have nothing henceforth to do with myself, as I am in myself. "I am not my own, I am bought with a price." Fleshly things are all dead to me, and I to them. Names are nothing, they only belong to the flesh, there is but one body, that is Christ: therefore there is but one name for that one body, which is Christ. So then being baptized into this one body, I recognize myself no longer as Paul. The flesh and all belonging to it, in its corrupt workings, appertains to the "old things" which are passed away: for "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new;" thus then, henceforth "to me to be living is for Christ to be living." What a gloriously-exalted privilege it is thus to live, and move, and have our being in Christ. Eternally one with Him! Eternally "complete in Him!" Therefore eternally acceptable in Him! Think. poor sinner, what that precious word contains-"He hath made us ACCEPTED IN the beloved!" Eph. i. 6.) It is not a thing to be done, after we have suffered a certain amount of penance, but it is an eternally finished work. And we may venture to add that no child of God will duly honour God with his substance—and faith is the substance of things hoped for-until he awakes from his unbelieving slumbers, in which he is dreaming about a felt meetness in self, to the glorious discovery that he is now, in the midst of all his fightings and fears, "accepted in the beloved," and therefore at all times, loved with a never-varying love. Yes, it does seem to be too great a blessedness to be true. Yet the shallowness of our capacities to receive the glorious testimony does not render it less true. And our mercy is, that although we believe not, so as to live upon the sweetness of the truth, yet "He abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself."

There are several scriptures which open to us the mind of the Spirit in this declaration of the apostles—"To me to live is Christ"—especially pointing out the blessedness of that union which preserves in unalterable oneness, Christ and his Church. We pray the Lord the Spirit to seal with sacred power each living word on the hearts of the dear exercised enquirer as we glance at a few.

First, "For as the body is one, and hath MANY MEMBERS, and ALL the members of that one body, Being MANY, ARE ONE BODY; SO ALSO IS CHRIST, (1 Cor. xii. 12,) now this cannot refer to Christ after the flesh, but as the twenty-seventh verse shows us, it

refers to Christ and his Church, "Now ye are the body of Christ." Then, here the church is distinctly called Christ, in the same way as in Jeremiah, it is first said of Christ (chap. xxiii. 6,) "And this is the name whereby HE shall be called, the Lord our righteousness," and afterwards of the Church in Him (chap. xxxiii. 16.) "And this is the name wherewith SHE shall be called, the Lord our righteousness;" this is the glorious priviledge of the children of God. The wife and the husband, being no longer twain, bear the same name, and are in fact but one: then "To me to live is [for] Christ [to live]." Hence we understand the blessedness of the

Second precious testimony—"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is MADE UNTO US wisdom and righteousness, and sanctifaction and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30: in connexion with which two matters, great and grand in their fulness of blessing, present themselves to us. First, a description of character pointing out those of whom this is spoken; and secondly, a declaration of the rich properties of that new creatureship, which belong to that holy calling. And here every little babe in Christ may find its true likeness in the description of character. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world [does not thy heart leap at the thought, thou poor little weak and straying lamb of the fold? Does not the precious thought revive thee in thy bondage, poor fellow pilgrim, whose head has grown gray in thy folly, so that thou art daily constrained to smite on thy breast with the Psalmist and cry, "So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee?" Yes, eternal praises to His loving kindness! God hath chosen the foolish things of the world!] to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the Weak things of the world [Yes, the weak in faith, like the disciples of old. "Oh ye of little faith!" weak in purpose, weak in mind, weak in memory, weak in perception, weak of spirit, weak of body, with a weak hand, a weak heart, and a weak head, yet, such hath God chosen to confound the things which are mighty: [whether mighty men or mighty devils] and BASE things of the world [especially so in their own esteem, not so much from what others can detect in them, as from what by the new light of spiritual life which is shining in their hearts, each one discerns in And how base is that chamber of imagery, the heart deceitful above all things! how base is that rebellious will that kicks and repines at every fresh lesson the teacher calls up attention to !

how base that ingratitude which can in a moment forget every mercy, and even the hope of salvation itself, and take part with the tempter in some vain and sinful thing, or turn aside to listen to his traitorous suggestion respecting the kindness of Him who ceases not to regard with infinite and unchanging love! Base! no words can paint the black baseness of the carnal mind of these called ones! they know to their hourly sorrow, the truthfulness of the portrait. The base things of the world and the things which are despised hath God chosen and what thing on the face of the earth is so despised as a truly-broken hearted follower of Jesus? He was despised and rejected of men-of religious men! and let one of His lambs now tell out of the abundance of his heart, a little of that which the Lord the Spirit has revealed in him by His personal testimonies of the preciousness of Christ, and the formally-religious man will despise and reject him as an enthusiast or a fool. Or let a poor troubled anxious seeker of the Lord pour out his sorrows and his fears into the bosom of one of these cold-reasoning professors, with what contempt will he treat those first yearnings of true spiritual life after "the sincere milk of the word," which can alone satisfy the desire of a spiritually new-born babe. It must be so, there is a reality and a power in the testimony of a living soul, though it be but the first breathings of spiritual hunger and thirst after righteousness. which conveys conviction into the mind of the formalist similar to that which excited the enmity and drew forth the contempt of the "wise and prudent" pharisees, when they cast forth out of their respectable society that poor man, who having received his sight. ventured to bear testimony to the power of Jesus (John ix. 30, &c.) Art thou despised, poor troubled one? Is it because thou canst not settle down contentedly with a set of religious people, who when they have run through a certain round of religious duties full of zeal and animation outwardly, it is true—smile complacently at thy anxious expression of inward yearning after a peace and a comfort which cannot be drawn from these external things? Art thou despised, because in the midst of the gay scenes of missionary effort thou art like a forlorn one, who, while others appear to have all the companionship their hearts desire, thou art alone. weighed down at heart, hearing every thing, even in these excellent outward circumstances of christian duty, whispering to thee. "It is not in me?" Art thou despised, because at the root of every flourishing gourd under which others delight to repose, thou art ever detecting the worm of sin? Art thou despised because thy heart is knitted to some like-minded one whose testimony for

Jesus does not accord with the fashionable notions which float upon the surface of our pious societies? The Lord help thee to rejoice in this sure mark of his favour. He has given thee a living heart, and after thou hast tried to satisfy its living desires with what men call religion-but which, if Christ be not the Alpha and the Omega, will prove to thee but husks, and thou hast found all in vain. He will open to thee the glories of His own person and love, and convince thee that none but Himself can satisfy and fill that yearning heart, which, since thou hast had it. has made thee unfit for any society but those who have themselves this new and living heart. To be despised on this ground is but to have fulfilled in ourselves what our dear Lord said in his last prayer should be the effect of this gift to his people. given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world." Mark! it was the religious world which persecuted Christ, and so is it still, full of enmity to His image when discoverable in a truly living heart. Nevertheless, these things which are despised hath God chosen.

But here we must pause. We beg every earnest one to contemplate deeply these characteristics. They contain in them some of those *living* and abiding evidences by which each one for himself must answer the momentous question, "Do I live Christ?

His peace be with you all. Amen.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST?

(No. 2.)

" For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21.

ALTHOUGH the Lord has most plainly told us, that in the world we must have tribulation, and that He hath chosen us in the furnace of affliction; and although we know it must be so, that it is for our special profit, and that our sweetest lessons of love and visits from Jesus have met us in the hottest fires; yet so slow of heart are we to believe, that we find daily a constant proneness to account every fresh token of the Lord's favour towards us, which comes in the shape of an affliction, rather as an evil thing than a positive

good.

The Lord begins his wonderful course of instruction with most of his living children, "Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little;" but the littles make but slight impressions; it is when "Judgment is laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail sweeps away the refuge of lies, and the waters overflow the hiding-place;" when we are so "minished and brought low" that we fall down with none to help; when we are brought into the condition of a drowning man—not merely troubling about wet feet, wet clothes, or catching cold, but—with the life at stake, crying, "I sink, save Lord, I perish! There is but a step between me and death!" It is when we come to this position in heart-felt experience, that by the sweet and powerful testimonies of the Spirit, Christ becomes "All and in all" to us. By this teaching the child of God is driven completely out of self, and compelled to cast anchor, sink or swim, in "Jesus only."

However painful it may be to be thus brought down, it is the only way we can come by a true spiritual knowledge of the charac-[THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 1]. teristics of those who like Paul can rejoice in the mercy, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

We closed our previous lecture while pointing out the spiritual import as bearing on the subject before us of the Apostle's testimony in the first chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, as to the characters of those called ones to whom he was pouring out the precious consolations of the Gospel, namely, "foolish, weak, base, despised things." "Yea," adds the Apostle, "and THINGS WHICH ARE NOT."

This is a most remarkable and deeply important characteristic for the Lord's little faiths to contemplate. What other words could be used so strongly to mark the character of the Lord's heaven-born children? They are the Lord's chosen nothings! Paul was one of these nothings! How became he thus nothing? Was he always nothing? No. When madly travelling to Damascus, he felt there were few religious people in the world who could vie with him. What then made this great change? The Lord Himself brought him down, and made him willing to part with all things, and become nothing, that he might "win Christ, and be found in Him." "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Pail. iii. 8).

Let us, however, here point out a matter for earnest spiritual examination. There is all the difference between being nothing in God's sight, and being nothing in our own. In ourselves we ever have been, and ever shall be, nothing in God's sight. "For Christ is all and in all." But to be brought truly to be nothing in our own sight, that is, to be brought to see ourselves really as God sees us, is that lesson of all others we find so difficult beyond expression to learn. And yet this is the lesson to which all our daily crosses, all our fiery trials, all our floods of tribulation, all our sore temptations, lead us. Every rod says, "Down, down, into the dust of nothingness-down, down, into the valley of humiliation." Now, how clearly does it appear, that as all this process of self-demolition is carried on by the Holy Spirit's power wrought in us, and that all His teachings are bestowed upon us, that we may profit thereby. Therefore, the nearer we are brought to see ourselves utterly nothing, the nearer we must be coming to see ourselves as our covenant God and Father ever delights to behold us; namely, all fair, all comely, all perfection, all that He can admire IN CHRIST. Let it be therefore fixed as a divine axiom on the minds of all the Lord's little faiths; that, if they do not see themselves yet as God sees them, in Christ, it is because they are not yet brought low emough—having suffered the loss of all things, so as to see themselves in themselves as God beholds them—utterly nothing. Nevertheless, what sweet ground for comfort is to be found here, since the lower we find ourselves to be sinking in our own estimation, the more clearly is this closing characteristic being developed in us."

"Yea, and things which are not," hath God chosen.

This brings us again to look at the rich cluster of blessings which are declared by the holy Apostle to belong to that new life and new creatureship which we have in Christ Jesus, as these called ones, and by virtue of which we venture to say, "To me to live is Christ."

"I know," says the Lord's dear little faiths, "you have exactly drawn my portrait, in what you have said about the foolish, the weak, the base, the despised—and I think I do feel I am, and can do, nothing. And yet I cannot, I dare not boldly say, 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Well, be it so, still there is nothing against you in this fear and trembling. "The Lord must persuade Japheth, and enlarge him too" (Gen. ix. 27). It is one of the most beautiful features in the character of the Lord's own living children, that they can receive nothing, so as to rest their hope and consolation upon it, through the head merely, that is to say, because they can clearly understand the matter in their intellects; they must have it wrought by the power of the Spirit in the heart, so as to feel their affections moved thereby. All true faith comes this way. It is "faith that worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). Now love, as we are compelled often to observe, being the grand centre of all, has not its residence in the intellect, in the brain, but in the affections, in the heart. Until love begins to pipe, the heart cannot begin to dance to the sweet music.

The Lord help his "little faiths" to attend to one most important point. It is not your saying, knowing, or believing, that "To you to live is Christ," that constitutes the blessedness of the mercy; but it consists in the being and existence of the thing itself, in all its reality and unalterable truth. The little babe does not live by saying, I live, knowing it lives, or believing it lives; but it lives by abiding in life, and because life abides in it. We know that the babe lives, because it moves, and cries, and hungers, and feeds. We delight to see a babe happy, and in sweet and quiet repose; or to see the light of joy chasing away the tear of sorrow from its tender eye; but the smile is not

necessary as a proof of life. Just so with the called one in Christ Jesus; he could not feel his folly, baseness, weakness, or nothingness, if he were dead; therefore it is because he lives spiritually, he feels as he does. But can the full knowledge of what this life is, where it is, and what belongs to it, make him more alive than he is? No. All it can do for him is to cause him to enjoy this life, to triumph in this life, and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of this most glorious eternal life. But why glorious? Because Christ personally is this life; so that to be living in this life, and by this life, is to be living Christ.

Having briefly passed over the features of those who are truly "living Christ," whether in the enjoyment of the mercy or not: and having shown thereby that according to the nature of the case they are compelled to live out of themselves, having nothing in themselves upon which, as new creatures, they can exist, which will be seen to follow as a natural consequence, as they are truly brought down in spiritual feeling to know their absolute nothingness; we now pass on to contemplate that glorious testimony recorded by the Holy Ghost through the pen of the Apostle, as to that which is secured to these weak, foolish, base, despised nothings, by virtue of their union to Christ.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made UNTO US wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 30, 31).

Here we have the rich properties of grace connected with our new creatureship set before us, in which there are two distinct points

of blessedness for us to consider.

First, "To us to live is Christ," because "of HIM," namely, God the Father, are ye in Christ Jesus; and secondly, "To us to live is Christ," because that same glorious Person, even our precious Lord Jesus Christ, "of God is MADE UNTO US wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Our dear Redeemer gives us a key to unlock this wonderful treasury in his prayer, as recorded in the 17th chapter of John. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made PERFECT in one," Christ Himself being the life, our perfection, and the perfection of our life, because He is "All and in all."

We feel constrained to pause here, and remark that many wise and prudent ones whose eyes may pass over these pages, may sneer at the idea of poor people understanding things so deep and full of mystery. But we rejoice to tell such, that we could take

them to many poor old pilgrims—poor in this world, but rich in faith—to whom we would read these things, and let our cavillers ask them, "Do you understand what this means?" who would turn upon them a bright and joyous eye, and reply, "Know what they mean, Sir? Yes, bless the Lord, I have been living in this life, feeding on this heavenly manna, and drinking at this living fountain, for years." And it may be they would add with one of old, although with a widely different meaning, "Sir, the well is deep, and you have nothing to draw with." And to this we must add that solemn word of our Lord's, which is still true to the letter, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

But if I am one of God's nothings, born again from above, it is manifest that the first point of blessedness is mine; namely, "Of Him are ve in Christ Jesus?" How? For what purpose, and whence came I there? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. i. 3, 4). From this it appears that I-if one of God's nothings-was chosen in Christ, in order that I might be eternally holy and without blame before my covenant God and Father, as He encircles me in the arms of his everlasting love, and this before time began, that no time circumstance should pluck me out of his hand. Then, to crown all, that nothing should fail so as to mar the glorious plan, He blessed meif one of his nothings—with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST! not in myself—eternal praises to his wisdom, lovingkindness, mercy, and grace, or I should have lost it ten thousand times over! No. It is IN CHRIST.

Now come, my dear anxious fellow-pilgrim, look at the glorious testimony in all its grandeur! Ask the question—the blessed Comforter fix it on your troubled heart! What is the chief thing contained in that boundless treasure, ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS? Is it not LIFE? What were all the unsearchable riches of Christ without spiritual life? It is true the riches in themselves would remain the same, but to us they would be a blank. The Lord help you to cast aside all calculations then, until you have come to some little measure of knowledge of the glory of this life.

But you object, you are so changeable in your feelings, so dark

in your mind, so full of doubts and questionings, and terrifying suggestions. The world and its many engagements take up so much of your time and thoughts, your prayers feel all dead, and your hope seems perishing like a tree; or, it may be, you are even worse than this, almost like one twice dead and plucked up by the roots. Fear not, dear brother! Thou hast many a sad companion plodding up-hill with thee, torn by the same briers, tormented with like fears, and pursued by the same enemy. But could we whisper one wish into thine ear—what think you would it be? The best wish we can express to you is, that you were feelingly brought to nothing. "When they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both."

"Tis perfect poverty alone That sets the soul at large."

When the prodigal had spent ALL, he came to himself and said, "I will arise and go to my father." When the poor woman had spent ALL, she pressed through the crowd, saying, "If I may but touch." When Jonah got into the "belly of hell," he said, "I will look again to thy holy temple." Oh, to LIVE NOTHING! The point, however, we especially desire to press on the heart of every troubled one, is this. How is it you feel as you do? The world, formal reading, prayers and ordinances, give you no relief! Was it always so? No. What has made the change? LIFE! What life? Even that life which God your Father included in the ALL spiritual blessings with which He blessed you in Christ before the foundation of the world! Oh, say you, that I could but see it thus, I should then be content! Listen, you cannot see it, because it is written, "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). But there is not a cry that ascends from thy heart—there is not a groan that is pressed out of thy troubled spirit—there is not a sigh that breaks forth from thy bosom, but LIFE is the source of all. True spiritual life, that life which is hid in Christ—vea, more, Christ Himself is that life (Col. iii. 4.) "In Him is life," all out of Him is death; therefore it follows, if we have a single spiritual desire after Him, it is because we are in Him. New creatures in Him. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. ii. 10).

Here let us observe, that as it is naturally, so is it spiritually; it is the same life which animates my hand, that gives pulsation to my heart, and action to my brain. Just so, as we in our new-creature-ship are members of the body of Christ, so there is but ONE LIFE in and by which both head and members exist. And this, not

in a merely mystical sense only, but in a real, operative, and distinguishable manner. It is true we cannot define the mode of existence of this life, but we can clearly feel and apprehend, both in ourselves and in others, the actual presence and effects of this life. Some of the effects we have already pointed out, and these are the more abiding tokens of this life, arising as they do chiefly, from the needs which this life produces in the soul. There are, however, other much higher, and far more glorious effects which now and then cheer us, like rainbows painted by the sun's sweet rays on the tearful clouds, which ever attend us on our homeward journey. Of these bright scenes we shall say but little here, our present object being more particularly to point out to those who are mourning in confusion and darkness, the reality and blessedness of that life by the operation of which they are brought to feel and know those things which cause them, while in this tabernacle, to groan being burdened. So that, although it may not be the good pleasure of the Lord to bring them into the full liberty of the Gospel hereby at once, yet they may be led in some measure to rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and to see for their present comfort, encouragement, and quickening in the pilgrim-journey; that, at the least, . they may venture to hope that they have heard the voice of the Son of God saying to them, "Lazarus, come forth!" and that, therefore. in obedience to the life-giving command, they are truly brought up out of the sepulchre of death; although for the present, they are bound round about with grave-clothes, and their vision clouded by the veil which is not yet taken away. Moreover, that in this hondage condition, like Lazarus, they need but one thing to make their joy complete, namely, for their great Deliverer to put his hand a second time to the work, issuing his blessed mandate, "Loose him and let him go." We know from many years of such experience that, although "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," yet long before the bonds of death were taken away, and the napkin withdrawn from the face; so that we could plainly see our dear Deliverer, rejoice in his smiles, and sing with the Apostle, "To me to live is Christ;" that many were the heart-melting seasons of communion, many the tokens for good by the way, many the sweet drops of honey from the Rock Christ, which cheered and helped us on, and for a season caused the mourner to go forth in the dances of them who make merry. Indeed, it is to this time of half-bondage we look back and find many of our sweetest Ebenezers and memorials of the Lord's precious manifestations, giving us a sweet though short revival in our bondage. Therefore, we say

with our dear tried brother, "Who hath despised the day of small The Lord's dear children will not; for the stoutest among them know that it is still by the droppings of the same fountain, by the coming down of the same rain of doctrine, and by the sweet distilling of the same dew of his precious speech, that they still flourish in the courts of the Lord. Yea, more; it is still with the Lord's living ones, who can say from the precious revelation of the fulness of the blessedness of the Gospel of Christ, "To me to live is for Christ to live;" just as it was before they were brought by the Spirit's teaching into the enjoyment of that "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," inasmuch, as they have no more power over the joy of faith, than they had before; they have to wait as long-many will say, Ay, longer too by far-than in the days of their half-bondage, for those heavenly visits from a precious Christ, which then formed the great landmarks on which hope and expectation were ever hanging on the watch, and which now are waited for, longed after, and enjoyed above all things, as little transcient foretastes of those good things to come, which we know can alone satisfy those unbounded desires which are ever expanding and overflowing in that noble mind, which, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, has been called up into eternal existence in us, by virtue of our union to our most glorious Head. And that it is noble, and that under the ministry of the Holy Ghost it should expand and carry up and away our thoughts and affections far above all time bubbles, need we wonder? For, as we are living in Christ, and Christ is living in us, thus stands the glorious truth in all its soulelevating properties, "But we have the MIND of Christ." Yes. As it is the same life which animates both head and members, it is the same mind which pervades that life, directing and influencing every circumstance and feeling connected with that new creation which, though formed of many members, yet is one body: as it is written, "And all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." But we pause.

His peace be with you all. Amen.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST? (No. 3.)

" For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21.

Too much stress cannot be laid on the glorious truth which occupied our thoughts towards the close of the last lecture; that if we are spiritually living members of the body of Christ, our great source of joy should be, that there is but one life common to both head and members. As this great truth in all its fulness of blessed consequences opens up and expands in the renewed mind, under the Divine ministry of the Spirit, so the child of God will be brought up out of all that he sees and laments over in himself after the flesh, to the soul-satisfying, mind-ennobling, and heart-ravishing apprehension, that, as a new creature in Christ, he henceforth lives in Christ's life, and Christ's life, lives, in all the holy, blessed, and eternally glorious properties thereof, in him.

All our dear Lord's precious testimonies go to prove this position; especially we would take the vine and the branches. The root, the parent stem, and the branches, have but one life. The branches can only live as the root, and the parent stem gives forth life, and nourishment to sustain that life. But the root and parent stem live by the same life which flows from them into the branches; therefore, whatever be the nature and the properties of the life which dwells in the root and the stem, the branches being one therewith, have the same nature, and partake of the same properties.

Yet, evidently, only so as they "abide" in the vine.

Oh but, say some, this is merely a parabolical way of setting forth things which are spiritual, which are not to be taken as REALLY EXISTING; but rather as representing A STATE OF MIND into which those who are really religious are brought by the influence of reli-

gious opinions and convictions on the mind.

Now, a little serious reflection will show how much of that which, in our day of fashionable profession, passes for Christianity, is of this mere mental quality, and not that religion which is the inevitable consequence of the inbeing of true spiritual life in the soul, the first characteristics of which we have already noted; the discovery of which characteristics, namely, folly, baseness, weakness, despicableness; yea, felt-nothingness in all that belongs to self, is the invariable effect of the development of divine life within.

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURES, No. 12.

Here, before we proceed, we must pause to observe, what an awful state of delusion is that into which Satan has lulled all such as are complacently moving on in the round of religious observances which are so common among us, with no better conversion for their starting point, than the influence of religious opinions acting on the mind. The true position of such is that of a miserably destitute beggar, who in a sound sleep dreams he is a prince, and sees himself surrounded by all the pomp and courtly glitter of such a station: but who, in a few minutes, shall awake to his utter misery, now to be made a thousand-fold more wretched by the remembrance of his princely dream.

"Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked! I counsel thee to buy of me

gold TRIED IN THE FIRE:

['Faith that stands fast while devils roar, And love that lasts for evermore !']

that thou mayest be rich; and WHITE RAIMENT that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As MANY AS I LOVE, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. iii. 17, 19).

Cheer up, my poor afflicted, exercised brother! Would you change your living feelings, miserable as they sometimes make you, for the placed self-satisfaction to be found in the beggar's dream? No. It is far better to be hungry than dead. What said our blessed Lord? "Is not the life more than meat?" (Matt. vi. 25). Read this as referring to our spiritual life, and ask yourself the question, Is it not a million times better to be living than dead? Although our daily experience shows us that to be living is to be groaning in this tabernacle, being burdened; because there are now two totally and irreconcilably different and distinct parties ever actively engaged within, fighting the one against the other. Where this is not the case, it is a sure sign of death. Paul tells us plainly, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. v. 17). Nevertheless, where this warfare is going on, it is an ever-present, an abiding, evidence of the existence of spiritual life in that soul; not as an opinion or conviction in the mind, but as a living, acting, palpable property, which is as truly felt in its working, as light is perceived by the eye; sound by the ear, or substance by the touch. Those who have it not, may affirm that it does not exist. Yea, they can do no other. But not so with a living child of God, who FEELS that he is in himself a mass of "folly, baseness, weakness, despicableness—yea, nothingness," yet would give a world had he a world to give to rise out of himself, above himself, and live as holy as God is holy; and because he finds this is impossible, therefore has an ever-present yearning of heart after a full knowledge of pardon. justification, and peace in the blood, righteousness, and Person of our most glorious Christ. With such, you might as well attempt to dispute them out of their senses, as to persuade them there is no such thing as LIVING SPIRITUAL FEELING. And this can no more exist in us without union to Christ, who is the source of all spiritual life, than the feeling of love can exist in the heart of a dead man. And all this arises to us out of that blessedness revealed to us by the Spirit in the words we were dwelling upon in the last lecture, "But of Him are ve in Christ Jesus." Blessed with eternal life in Him as the first or foundation blessing in the covenant, ordered in all things and sure.

We must not pass away from the contemplation of the reality of that life in which Paul rejoiced when he said, "For to me to live is Christ," without looking at a precious word or two in confirmation. This is the more necessary, because all we have to say of the blessedness of "living Christ," hangs upon this point; namely, that the life in which and by which as new-creatures in Christ Jesus we live and have our being, is a real, palpable, operative life, as real as either of our senses, and as perfectly distinct from our natural life, as the sense of taste is distinct from the sense of sight. And moreover, that this spiritual life is that very life which animates our most glorious Head Christ Jesus; as truly so, as in the case of the vine, it is the extension of the same individual life which animates the root and the parent stem, which keeps in living existence, the smallest, and feeblest, farthest-off tendril on the remotest branch of that vine.

Here we must observe, that by what the Lord teaches us of our oneness with Himself, we are not to stumble into the mystic notions that we are thereby *deifted*, which is at once absurd, since to become gods we must become self-existent, which is as far as it can be, opposed to all we have said or shall say, respecting our union and oneness of life with our most glorious Head.

That Christ throughout his ministry spake of a real life, and not of a mere change of mind, will appear if we look at a few of his precious testimonies, bearing in mind while we examine them,

that "He who spake as never man spake," knew the effect his words had upon the thoughts of those to whom He spake; moreover, He was infinitely wise, so that He could not fail in the choice of words to express what He meant to convey; besides which, He declares that He is Himself personally "the truth;" therefore, He could not intend to produce a wrong impression on the minds of those to whom He spoke. Now carrying these three considerations with us, let us see what those to whom He spake, thought of what He said.

Nicodemus understood Christ to be speaking of a matter as real as his natural birth, when he heard the Saviour say, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven," as appears by his answers; yet our dear Redeemer still presses the reality of the matter home, by repeating the same thing; nevertheless, showing that while the second-birth is as real as the first, yet the one is of the flesh, the other of the Spirit. Especially is it manifest that this being born again, could not refer to a change of mind, but to the reception of a new and real life, from what Christ adds, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Now, all mere changes of mind, such as lead to a reformation of life, are the effects of arguments addressed to a man's reason, and which may be traced step by step up to the source thereof; therefore, we know whence comes this change; besides which of these arguments it cannot be said as of the wind, "it bloweth where it listeth"-or where it wills. Arguments addressed to a man's reason are not above the comprehension of a man, nor beyond his power to controul; therefore, totally unlike the wind, which, as a real and a mighty agent in the hand of God, goes and comes, producing real effects altogether beyond the comprehension and controll of those things and persons which are acted upon thereby. "SO is every one that is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus could not have understood this to refer to a mere change of mind, or he would not still marvel and say, "How can these things be?"

But the reality of that spiritual life which the children of God possess as new-creatures in Christ, will appear to be for ever distinct from any mere change of mind, however great that change may be, either in itself or in its effects, by referring to those conclusive testimonies given us by our blessed Lord in the 5th and 6th chapters of John. Christ is here speaking as the glorious Mediator, our elder Brother, Immanuel, God in our own nature. "For as the

Father raiseth up the dead, and [literally) maketh them alive; even so the Son maketh alive whom He will Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but IS PASSED from [or out of] death unto [or into] life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For AS the Father hath life in Himself, SO hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John v. 21—26). To these important testimonies add the 57th verse of the 6th chapter, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: SO he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

Surely, none will question that Christ is here speaking of a real, palpable, operative life, and not of a state of mind, when declaring that as the Father, so the Son, hath life in Himself, and that in this life, as the sent of the Father, he lived by the Father. But mark the blessedness of the conclusion. If so with reference to Christ personally, it follows that it is so with reference to every member of his mystical body, as it is written, "SO he that eateth me [even he—foolish, weak, despicable, nothing creature as he may be in himself], shall live by me." If the latter mode of existence refers only to a state of mind, then must the mode of the existence of Christ, as He declares Himself to be in oneness of life with the Father, signify nothing more than a state of mind; to affirm which is blasphemy.

But that the spiritual life which every regenerated child of God possesses is a 'real life, as truly so as the life he derives by nature from the first Adam, will appear upon another view taken of these same precious testimonies, and their connection, since the life that is here spoken of has real faculties, properties, and actings.

Our dear Lord brings before us in these chapters—namely, the 5th and 6th of John, a series of operations which can only be performed by those who have life, and He most distinctly shows us the origin of that life, before He mentions the fruits and effects produced by it. Our adorable Jesus makes no jumble of the matter, as do multitudes of modern propounders of man-made systems of divinity now. But, bringing his hearers to the foot of Jacob's ladder, He commences with the first step. And what is that? Repentance? Believing? No. Nor is it hearing. But it is a step which He alone who called the universe into being, can enable and cause a man to take! It is a step out of death into life.

The more the minds of the Lord's dear tried and exercised chil-

dren are brought to dwell upon this truth, and the deeper the Holy Comforter leads them into the fulness of blessedness that is contained in thus starting on our pilgrimage, as having eternally—for it is eternal life in which as new-creatures we live—passed over out of death into life, and that this life is hid with Christ in God, the more simple will all those things become which now so sadly perplex them, and the easier will they be able to understand the nature and causes of those ever-changing frames and feelings to which they are subject, which, until traced to their true source, work so much tribulation in the minds of the Lord's little faiths.

In these chapters Christ speaks of hearing, believing, coming, eating and drinking; to accomplish either of which it is absolutely indispensable that a person be alive. In opening this most important of all subjects, our Lord begins first by declaring his own power and Godhead: which was necessary to show that He was able to accomplish that, in all those whom the Father had given to Him, which would enable them "TO WILL AND TO DO" according to his covenant purpose and grace. He therefore thus begins, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" (ver. 17, chap. v.) . . . "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth them life, even so the Son giveth life to whom HE WILL." We here have a declaration of the Divine power of the Son of God, which the Jews fully understood Christ to claim, by what He declared respecting Himself; therefore they "sought the more to kill Him," for "making Himself equal with God." Nor does He in the least degree attempt to correct them in the conclusions they came to, which as, "the truth," and knowing their thoughts, He must have done, had they attached a wrong sense to his words, in a case which involved a matter of so deep importance; but rather, He goes on, in the strongest manner, to confirm their convictions even so far as to claim equal worship with the Father, "That all powers—men is in italics, and too low, should honour the Son, EVEN As they honour the Father."

But now observe the subject which our blessed Lord connects with this most full and glorious assertion of his Divine power and Godhead. He is preaching the Gospel, opening up the only way of salvation. Having then laid the foundation, even the immutable Rock of ages, He points out to poor sinners the eternal advantage they derive from the fact, that He who then stood before men, "clothed in a body like their own," possessed in Himself power to

give life-spiritual, eternal life-to every otherwise spiritually dead sinner of Adam's race, to whom HIS WILL directed Him to give Now thus stands our dear Lord's testimony in all its simplicity and sovereign glory. Men may hate the doctrine, as we know every natural man will and must; "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God. neither indeed can be [Christ is God, and his will the law by which He works; so that they that are in the flesh; that is, spiritually dead in sin, cannot please God." Yes, and men may quibble about terms, and try to explain away the great foundation-truth through which flows to us an eternity of blessedness; namely, that the life by which we become new-creatures is a real life; they may take refuge in a conversion, which is a mere change of mind, and not a new creation; or they may take refuge in man's free-will. But all this alters not the true state of the matter. Christ is the eternal God. His free-will, and not man's, is his guide. What the Father wills, the Son wills, and the Holy Ghost wills; as there is unity of essence, there must be unity of will: therefore it follows. and the issue of matters will prove it, that the ultimate glory of Almighty God, is not a thing to be tossed about at the will of proud. self-conceited, but fallen and sinful man, but is now being worked out according to the designs of infinite wisdom, and according to the good pleasure of his own immutable will.

This doctrine of the sovereignty of the will of Christ in his gifts and callings, is the offence of the cross; and the Christ of God is a Stumbling-stone and a Rock of offence still, if He is thus set forth as carrying on his kingly government, giving life to whom HE WILL, while all who are passed by remain as utterly dead and incapable of hearing spiritually, believing spiritually, coming spiritually, eating spiritually, or drinking spiritually, as Satan himself is.

All mankind are divided into two classes. The class known as the many, the multitude, is in the broad way of death. The class known as the few, the remnant according to the election of grace, is in the narrow way of life. In the broad way there is one thing in which, as by universal consent, is agreed upon by all, irrespective of creed or no creed, profession or no profession, namely, to despise, cast out as evil, and with a common feeling of burning enmity, which the natural, or non-spiritual man cannot controul, to deny THAT GOD ONLY LOVES HIS ELECT.

Reader! art thou a pious person? and yet dost thou feel at this moment the boiling up within thee of enmity to the obnoxious doctrine? The Lord help thee to stop, and honestly consider the truth of our statement. Ask an infidel or a man of the world,

what class of professing Christians he most dislikes, and see if he will not produce the BROAD-BOAD BADGE! He will reply, Those who say God only loves his elect! Thou art pious! Thou art very zealous for the glory of God! Is there not a lurking conviction in thy mind that it must be true, that it is certainly revealed in God's word? But is there not side by side with this conviction, a something that says within thee, No! no! I would lay down my life in the service of God, but I could not love him if I were sure this is true. I can never confess this faith before the world. But dost thou not find at times, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks of conscience in this matter? Be honest before God! He reads all thy heart. Thy piety cannot deceive Him, although it may thyself, and others. But why so offended? Hast thou charity enough to cause thee to be KIND, AFFECTIONATE, and MOST SOLICIrous, for the well-being of every other person under heaven, who honestly expresses his convictions, be they EVER SO ERRONEOUS, excepting that person, who from the fullest persuasion that he is honouring his God by doing so, freely and fully confesses the WHOLE TRUTH? How is it you, whom we believe to be DECIDEDLY PIOUS, canst love every one you meet, even though you know them to be in the broadway, and yet you feel an inward rising of positive enmity on meeting one of those narrow bigots who is obliged to believe that the Holy Ghost could not err in recording by the instrumentality of Paul those words in the 9th of Romans; "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. It was said unto her [Rebecca]. The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Again, my pious friend, be not offended! But rather give diligence to make your calling and election sure, and permit us to make one parting remark. The Lord calls his sons out of the broad into the narrow road; therefore, you must not be surprised if one who has "passed over" should remember and expose the BROAD-BOAD BADGE, that he may warn others.

Yes, and the narrow road has its badge too. It is a tear! A tear of soft feeling sympathy with a dear, burdened, broken-hearted, returning prodigal—a publican smiting on his breast—a Mary weeping at the feet of Jesus! It is a tear, shed by the side of Him who wept over Jerusalem, as He contemplated the deadly consequences of sin. It is a tear wept with a God who weeps over, rather than takes pleasure, in the death of a sinner.

We proceed with our subject in our next.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST?

(No. 4.)

" For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21.

WE return to-day to our inquiry into the reality of that spiritual life to which Paul refers, when he declares he is living Christ. And we do so with earnest up-goings of spirit to the Divine Minister in the One Church, that He will so open up the sacred subject, and so anoint and enlighten the eyes of our understandings, that we may comprehend the precious truth in all its fulness of blessedness, that henceforth we may live in the assurance, that being partakers of this divine life, and therefore partakers of the divine nature, we never shall come into condemnation, being "Born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13). "For we are his workmanship, created—this is more than a change of mind—in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained [or, as in the margin—prepared]. that we should walk in them." Walking by faith; walking before God, and as Enoch, with God, being perfect; because walking in living union with our glorious Head, clothed in his spotless righteousness, washed eternally clean in his precious blood, complete in Him, and at all times—independent of our enjoyment of the rich privilege—accepted in the Beloved. Thus to be living daily, is to be learning about in ourselves the proofs of the Divinity of the Son "Who quickeneth whom HE WILL;" or, who giveth of God. life—divine, eternal—life to whom He will.

Having declared his eternal power and Godhead, and thereby asserted his indisputable prerogative in the exercise of that power as it is manifested at the new-birth of his children, our blessed Lord proceeds (John v. 24), to the development of the solemn and glorious subject, thus confirming it with his own peculiar double asseveration, "Amen, Amen, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, HATH everlasting life." Now mark, it does not say that by hearing and believing, eternal life shall be obtained. No. For if it contained these conditions, and was to be had as a reward for the performance of them, then it is manifest salvation or eternal life would still depend upon man's [The Gospel Cottage Lectures, No. 13.

obedience under the Gospel, just as it did at first when Adam was created; and therefore, if this was our dear Lord's meaning, salvation would still be by work and not by grace. But we bless our covenant God it is "by grace, to the end the promise might be SURE to all the seed." It is here every living child of God will find the preciousness of the subject begin to open up to him, when by faith, led by the Spirit, he is brought to see and to understand that all the anxiety, heart-sinking, and earnest inquiry after salvation which has been going on within him since he first heard the voice of the Son of God, is solely the fruit of that LIFE which came with the first word spoken through the Spirit within his soul. It was because life was in the word, and conveyed by the word, that the word spoken was heard, and that these living effects followed.

But our dear Lord takes us another confirming step in the 25th verse, "Amen, amen, I say unto you, The hour is coming, AND NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." Some may object and tell us this refers to the resurrection and not to the new-birth—to which we answer, by taking the words of Christ below, in the 28th verse where He says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming [but not now is], in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life [and the tree must be made good by getting a new life before it can bring forth good fruit, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Not to be annihilated! It is one thing to have eternal being, where the worm dieth not, and another thing to have eternal life in Christ. many modern speculators will find to their sorrow. That Christ is here speaking of two distinct operations of his invincible power, appears still clearer by taking into our argument the two verses which separate those we have quoted above. Thus often having declared in the 25th verse that the hour was then come, that the dead in sin should hear his life-giving voice and live. He points in the 26th verse again to his Divinity as the source of his power, to carry life into a dead sinner's soul, "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Here is the source of the regenerating power of Christ, then He adds, "And hath given Him authority to execute judgment Also." Thus distinctly showing that the resurrection to judgment of the body is distinct from the bestowal as a grace-gift of new life at our renewing or new creation in the regeneration.

But, as an illustration of this, we must take our stand at the

grave of Lazarus, and there see the effect of the same voice which now calls up every child of God out of the chamber of death in sin. into the living liberty of the Gospel of Christ. Oh, blessed freedom! "If the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed." Yes, it is eternal life: therefore, eternal freedom from death, and, if eternal freedom from death, it follows, there must be contained in this new life eternal freedom from sin; for where sin is, death must follow. But in this new life, and in the new creature, which is the "hidden man of the heart," who is animated by this new life, there is no sin; there can be no sin; nor can he be contaminated by the sin of the flesh, as it is written, "We know that whosoever for whatsoeverreferring exclusively to the new-man is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John v. 18). And the simple reason is because that which is begotten and born of God, is joined to the Lord, and one spirit, being made partakers of the divine nature, and it is impossible for that nature to sin, but more on this point by and by.

Before, however, we reach the grave of Lazarus, let us listen to those most memorable and precious words spoken by our dear Lord to Martha: "Jesus said unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha said unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I AM THE RESURREC-TION AND THE LIFE; he that BELIEVETH on me, though he WERE dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever LIVETH and BELIEVETH IN ME, SHALL NEVER DIE." Believing and living are here blessedly joined together in such a way, as to set forth the inseparable union of the one with the other; and, in reading over this most glorious testimony, it becomes absolutely necessary to understand both the believing and the life as supernatural; it is spiritual life and living spiritual believing, which our dear Lord is setting forth. But above all, let us not lose sight of the two precious words which form the key to the whole mystery, "IN ME." Then if I am a partaker of this life, "To me to live is Christ!" for He is the LIFE; then as new-creatures in Him, living in Him, and believing in Him, I am in that life, and that life is operating or working in me, which secures to me the unfathomable blessedness which Christ attaches to it, namely, that I "shall never die." Again, there is something more than a state of mind contained in these words. The putting forth of divine power in the regeneration, causing a man to partake of the divine nature, is more than mere conviction wrought on the mind, however deep.

We come now to contemplate the process as illustrated in the case of Lazarus. The Lord help each spectator as he gazes at this wonderful scene, to remember Christ's words to Martha; bring them to the tomb, and observe how the great work of *living* and *believing* is brought about.

Behold the power of the voice of the Son of God! Up to this moment Lazarus had been lying totally unconscious of all the anxious bustle going forward at the entrance of that cave of death; as the wondering multitude around it, in obedience to the mandate of the Lord, took away the stone. But it matters not, his unconsciousness formed no barrier in his way out of death into life. Why? In all the glory of his matchless power, there stands in majesty divine, that Almighty One who had just hushed Martha's unbelief, and calmed her spirit into peace by saying, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!" It is the same most glorious Person who once, in like manner, stood by the cradle of universal nature, and cried, "LIGHT BE! and LIGHT WAS!" It is the same blessed One who proclaimed to his disciples his own most precious name, "I AM the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE!" Yea, and the unutterable mercy in which we rejoice is, that this adorable Person is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Behold Him, poor troubled soul! Who can doubt the tenderness of the heart of Jesus now? What causes Him to weep? "He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Love and compassion, not fluctuating like ours, but unchanging infinite love and tenderness, then filled his heart, and its overflowings pressed the precious tear of sympathy from his sacred eyes.

The dear Comforter lead up your troubled spirit to-day in consoling contemplations, on the tenderness of Jesus, as the Head of his body the Church, "touched with a feeling"—not a knowledge only, that would be very blessed; but it is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities;" because living in the same life, as in nature our heads are the seat of sympathy with a sick or pained member of our bodies, which can only arise from the oneness of life which flows through the whole man; so by virtue of our living union to Jesus our glorious Head, He is still touched with a feeling of every care, every woe, every temptation, every persecution, every sorrow, to which his many members are subject, as they travail homeward through this wilderness. Oh, to come up to this standard of kiving Christ! so that under the daily apprehension of the vitality of the union which joins us to the Lord, we may truly feel that "He who toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." Although He weeps

no more, although He is no longer the Man of sorrows, yet He is acquainted with griefs; not only because He is God, but because in oneness of nature with us.

"He feels afresh each member's pains, For our afflictions' his."

While we thus behold and adore Him, let us follow out the progress of the scene before us, as an illustration of the way in which

we come by a feeling knowledge of this living union.

The stone is rolled away. The voice of Jesus is heard above the sobbing of the multitude. Every eye is turned upon Him with astonishment. But these are not commanding tones in which He speaks. No. But turning his tearful eyes to heaven, as the successful Advocate of his little flock, in their names and for their sakes, He presents a thanksgiving at the throne, as though the thing were done on earth, as He beheld it done in heaven. Jesus knew He had but to speak the word, and through that word life should be conveyed into that still unconscious one within the tomb. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

But let us complete our picture. The scene is changed. Every eye is beaming with anxious expectation and wonder. His tearful eye is dry. The countenance which a moment ago was turned upwards, saddened by sympathy, though full of gratitude and love, has now assumed the commanding majesty of sympathy and power! Follow the steadfast gaze of that piercing eye as it searches the darkness of that cave of death. Death still reigns there! No movement of preparation! No listening ear—but all is rigid and unconscious death! Three words alone suffice to work a change which all thunders which roll, and burst, and crash, and roll again among the crags of Sinai, could not effect. "Lazarus, come forth!" Life spake the word—life filled the word—life conveyed the word—life heard the word! Death is swallowed up in victory, and sleeping Lazarus comes forth again to hear, and to believe, to eat, to drink, and hold communion with death's Conqueror, and our eternal life!

Again, some may object, all this is true, but what proof have we here that this was anything more than an exhibition of the power of Christ to raise the dead naturally? What is there in the whole narrative to warrant our using it as setting forth the spiritual circumstances of our new birth? We answer: The account that our blessed Lord gives of Himself to Martha in connection with this manifestation of his power, proves beyond a question, that He had some greater object in view than the bringing back into natural

life his friend Lazarus, when He says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall NEVER DIE." If the last words, the fruit of living and believing in Christ, refer to spiritual, and not natural death (which we presume none will dispute) it follows, so must the living and the believing connected therewith, refer to supernatural living and believing, which is the point we claim, and which will give us warrant to use this most beautiful instance of the Almighty, life-giving power of the word of Christ, as an intended illustration of that spiritual life-giving power, the exercise of which calls sinners, dead in sin, into spiritual life and being, as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

None doubted the reality of that life which caused Lazarus to come forth out of his grave. He walked, he talked, he hungered, he thirsted. So Christ, in the 6th chapter of John, puts this as the proof of living spiritually. "Whose eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, HATH ETERNAL LIFE." It is "Jesus only" is the food of the new creature. It is Himself, the bread of life, which is the Staff of our spiritual life. But then we live in Him, and therefore can never fail, for He is infinitely full of all that we need. How blessed then the fulness of that testimony (John vi. 56), "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: SO he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

Before, however, we proceed further, we must pause a moment, and answer that rising sigh in thy anxious bosom, beloved "little faith." Since it is for your sakes—that you may be built up in Christ Jesus—we are ever going forth in longing desires in the Lord, that the dear Comforter will make the precious truth very simple in our hands; and that every stone and stumbling-block may be

gathered up out of thy path.

Many a little faith is saying, But I cannot look back to any particular time, when a like Almighty word was spoken in my soul. Be it so—there is nothing against thy being a plant of the Lord's own planting, because thou canst not remember the time of thy transplanting out of nature into grace. Observe now. At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus spoke with a loud voice—power or life was in the word. So also to Paul Christ spoke in a voice of thunder—power or life was in that word. But Elijah heard or felt the power or life; not in the tempest, but in the "still small voice!" To Samuel, while a child, the power, the life, came not with terrors, but by a calm, often-repeated, "Samuel! Samuel!" The same living power was felt by Jacob at Bethel. So gentle and so blessed was

the flowing-in of the power of life, that it awoke him not from his slambers, and was all accomplished in a dream. Yea, far more wonderful still is the case of John the Baptist, who, by the power of the Spirit through the words of Mary, heard the voice of the Son of God, and leaped for joy thereat, even before he was born!

What! could a state of mind only, thus cause the unborn John to leap, when the unborn Jesus entered the house of Elizabeth? No. Here was the power and Godhead of Jesus manifested, so as to confound the infidel, and cause the adoring believer to bow the head in sacred wonder, love, and praise. But especially by this we learn the reality of regenerating life, through which it was even possible for John to be born above, before he was brought forth in What unquestionable ground have we therefore for believing that many of the Lord's dear ones now, are made spiritually alive in infancy or childhood. But not as Rome-papal or Rome-Pusey teaches, through the drippings of the sinful fingers of sinful men, but by the life-giving energy of the Holy Ghost. Paul says, "If any man [or babe-man, expressed in the Greek] have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And moreover, we read. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Then, if it be true—which we cannot doubt—that all little ones who are taken hence in the bud of life, die in the Lord; it follows, that it is by virtue of their union in spiritual life to Jesus, and not by virtue of believing. Again, knowledge is no part of our life. babe just born, naturally, who has nothing, so far as can be perceived, but animal life, is as truly alive as Sir Isaac Newton was in the zenith of his glory. So many a child of God is truly alive, and feeling all the deep secret workings of spiritual life in the soul, long before the knowledge of the properties and immortal blessedness connected with that life, are opened up in the renewed mind. Therefore. our beloved "little faith" has no reason to trouble himself about the beginnings of this life; but the great question to be decided is, Art thou truly alive? This question decided, we then shall see the inestimable importance of the inquiry on which we have dwelt so long, and which we must still pursue, namely, the reality of this life. For since it is a real life, which nothing can kill, because it is eternal life, the possession of it, proves to us that we are among the sheep of Christ; and if the sheep of Christ, we were given to Him by the Father, which is the same thing as that which is expressed by the words out of which all that we have said respecting the reality of spiritual life has grown, "Of Him are ve in Christ Jesus." It is only by the felt-present possession of true spiritual life in all its real properties, that we can read with any degree of blessed personal interest and delight that most glorious testimony of Christ's, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any power pluck [or snatch] them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no power is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John x. 26—30).

"Ah! yes," say you, "it is very blessed to be able to read this,

and know that you are one of his sheep."

But how do we know it?

"Oh, he that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself;" but I feel nothing scarcely but darkness, fear, anxiety, and sad expectations of evil to come.

Did you ever hear the Lord's voice?

Well, I have hoped so sometimes; but my heart is so base, so rebellious, so full of this world's care, that I fear I was deluded by a vain hope, when I thought I heard his voice.

But stay—at the time when you thought you heard his voice, did not your heart burn within you, and did you not feel you could fol-

low the Lamb whithersoever He goeth?

Ay, yes, indeed, but it was over in a moment!

What was over? The remembrance of it? The out-flowing of earnest desire to the Lord, with many a cry in secret, Oh, come again, come again? "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope!"

Oh, no! I daily have that bright moment of heavenly hope, produced by the word, present in memory! and my desires and cries are, as you say, ever going out after a return; for I know if I could but feel again as I did then, I should be happy in a moment.

Dear little faith! what if this out-going of desire is believing and following? How then, stands the matter? The Lord help you to observe, you could not feel this desire, which is following in thought, and which springs from love, and is mixed with faith, unless you had spiritual life. This life is Christ's GIFT to his own sheep. And this life is the ever-abiding witness—for it is Christ dwelling in us by the Spirit—that we are the children of God.

His peace be with you. Amen.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST?

(No. 5.)

" For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21.

IT will be well to glance back at a link or two over which we have passed in our former lectures, that we may clearly ascertain at what point we are arrived.

Paul, knowing himself to be a new-creature in Christ, and contemplating himself as such, exclaims, "Then to Paul to be living, is for Christ to be living! since it is in Christ's life, I Paul, as a new-creature, live, move, and have my being." But Paul, in himself, is foolish, weak, base, despised, nothing! True, but this does not alter or interfere with his life in Christ. His life in Christ is altogether independent of what he is in himself, and altogether distinct from his mere natural life.

How absurd would it appear to us if on the day when our Prince of Wales attains his majority, while we gaze upon him with a heart full of earnest supplications on his behalf, and a mind full of anxious forebodings, as to the circumstances which probably will fill up his eventful life; we should hear some clown say, "Well, I do not see why he should be Prince of Wales, and heir to the throne, more than another. He is but a man; there are many bigger and stronger than he." Should we not turn with indignation and say, Thou fool! it is not because he is a man he has this title and honour; seest thou not his Royal Mother? It is because he is the branch nearest in oneness of life and blood with her, that he is Prince of Wales.

But how does this apply to Paul? Because as it is written, "Of Gop are ye in Christ Jesus." "Blessed with all spiritual blessings—eternal life being the chief—in covenant union—in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world."

It is into the eternal life we are gathered up—of this life we are made partakers, at regeneration; and once a partaker thereof it follows, as the life is eternal, "we can never die any more."

Being a spiritual life, all its operations and properties are spiritual; therefore, only felt, and in any degree understood, by those who have the life; for it is this life in a man that makes the dis-

tinction between a natural man and a spiritual man, as Paul plainly points out (1 Cor. i. 14), "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither CAN he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerneth [marginal reading] all things; yet he himself is discerned by no [natural] man."

Natural men construct their systems of religion on the supposition that conversion to God is nothing more than a change of mind—a new state of mind. But this is not Paul's religion; yea, a step higher. This is not the religion of Jesus. It is to prove this we are now showing that the life which is the beginning of true religion, is a real, palpable, operative life.

We feel we need no apology for dwelling so long on this part of our subject, since it is solemnly true that whatever amount of the glitter of profession may adorn a man, if he have not this life operating in, and influencing him in all he says, does, or thinks, although he be an ornament of the highest moral order in society, or in the church, he is a dead man clothed in a tinselled robe—"A potsherd covered with silver dross" (Prov. xxvi. 23).

There are the coronet, the plume, the robe of the Prince of Wales, but what are they? The wearing them, or even the assumption of the dignity itself, confer nothing without the royal blood, in which the life of the title flows. The blood is the life—the life makes all REAL.

Before we more fully contemplate the operative properties of spiritual life, as we have seen them in part set forth in the 6th of John, it may be profitable to examine two figures presented to us by the Saviour, evidently with the express design of shadowing forth the reality of that life by which "we dwell in Christ, and Christ dwells in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ is one with us;" and that, as we shall see, not by the influence of any arguments acting merely on the natural mind, but by the actual bestowment of a new life, which is set before us as the free and real gift of Christ. Mark, it is not offered—no; to offer a dead man life, would be mad mockery! But it is given, which, when referred to life, carries in it the conclusion that the receiver is not consulted in the matter, but is passive, until the life gives him power to act; and then, that it is not so much himself that acts, as the life which is in him, which moves him to move. Much hangs upon these important points, as we shall see more fully further on.

The first opening-up of the subject by our dear Lord, to which we allude, is that which is recorded in the 4th of John, in the history of the new-birth of the woman of Samaria.

Eternal life is here spoken of as a thing REAL and distinct from all that existed in the person before the GIFT was bestowed. Moreover, as the narrative proceeds, we actually witness bestowal of the gift, as distinctly as it was seen naturally in the case of Lazarus.

The life itself is represented by a well of *living* water, and its properties described to be such, that is ever-flowing in unceasing upgoings into everlasting life; that in and by these up-goings, those who possess this living well "worship God in spirit and in truth." How momentous, then, must be the question as to whether we possess this water of life; since without it, the case is clear, that we are among those who "worship they know not what."

The process by which the work of regeneration was performed in this woman, was very similar in its leading features to the bringing forth of Lazarus from the cave of death. It is, moreover, of importance to remark that it was accomplished by the same means, namely, the "Voice of the Son of God." In this case we see the development of faith, but there can be no faith without life first, having possession of the soul; for where life is not, there can be no spiritual hearing; and it is written, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" that is, as we have already seen, spiritual life in the word must give power to the dead soul to hear the word; or the word itself, although it enters the outward ear, and is read with the natural eve, remains a dead letter or a dead sound to the soul. This fact Paul clearly declares in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power [in living and life-communicating power and IN the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; or with great conviction, and full confirmation" (1 Thess. i. 5). This truth was beautifully exemplified in all the miracles and wonderful exhibitions of the power and Godhead of Christ when He was on earth. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psal. xxxiii. 9).

The first answers of the woman to Jesus, show clearly that when she came to the well, she was dead in trespasses and sins. At what point, then, are we to look for the first movement of Divine life in this woman's soul? What are the words by which she was called up out of death into living spiritual being? We behold the flash of living fire enter the magazine of death, and, as by one grand explosion, destroy the powers of darkness, and spoil the goods in which the strong man armed had trusted, and by which up to this moment he had kept this palace in peace, as we listen to the

"Lazarus, come forth!" spoken by the voice of Omnipotence, thus, "Go call thy husband, and come hither!" With these words lifeeternal life—entered. That living spring was unlocked in this chosen one, which is now overflowing in love and praise in the paradise of God!" Now mark the effect. Life carried conviction to the sinner's heart! In strict accordance with the testimony of Jesus as to the same work, which after He should be glorified, should be carried on by and in the power of the Spirit. "When He [the Spirit of truth—the Comforter] is come, He will reprove the world of sin;" or more properly convince of sin, as in the margin, for a reproof may stop in its effects at the outward ear, but a conviction, as in the case of the Samaritan woman, is wrought in the heart. What a living commotion was produced in the soul of this poor simmer by these simple words! But were they mere words? Upon this turns the question as to the reality of the GIFT OF GOD! Were they mere words which Christ spake to Paul, when He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" No. Life, real, palpable, operative life, was in the word; and therefore the word was heard, was felt, and produced the effects which followed. Just so in this wo-The moment the word entered conviction of sin was produced thereby, and instantly confession followed. "The woman answered and said, I have no husband." With what power the living conviction must have been thrust home, when the astounding endictment followed in all its open revelation of the hidden mystery of the iniquity of her heart and life! When "Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

Here we see this sinner, like Lazarus, brought up out of the grave of spiritual death; but yet "bound hand and foot with grave clothes [of error and sin], and her face bound about with a napkin of unbelief]." But let us observe the next effect of the gift of this spiritual life—the same life produces the same living effects still. What is the next step? The poor convicted one begins now to enquire in earnest, as to the nature and genuineness of her profession of religion. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain: and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." How truly does this pourtray, the struggles, of every newly living child of God before Christ is fully REVEALED IN THE HEART, the only hope of glory. How do they cling to systems, and forms, and ceremonies, and ordinances, hoping with a vain but zealous hope to get rid of their bondage by

something to be found in these. But all is of no avail. The same power which brought them out of the grave of spiritual death, must be put forth to release them from the bondage in which at their first coming forth, they find themselves enveloped. Moreover, it must be accomplished by the same means; for as Lazarus and the poor sinner found that LIFE came in the word of Christ, so they found also that LIBERTY was brought to them by the same Almighty word.

"Woman, believe me!" Now turns the current of her thoughts, which no longer inquire about "this mountain and Jerusalem;" but faith turns to the promise, and looks after the Person of Christ; and whether the work be a long or a short one, waits until Jesus Himself speaks the final liberty-proclaiming word, "I that speak unto thee, am He;" or, as in the case of Lazarus, "Loose him and

let him go."

The "Woman, believe me!" is a precious word, which takes the thoughts captive, and leads them in earnest, longing inquiries away from systems and from self, and sweetly opens the renewed mind to the discovery that all spiritual blessings are in Christ, and that Christ is all and in all to us; therefore, that He personally must be found, or there can be no true and abiding blessedness in life or in death. This living word produces in the soul that earnest pressing and holy violence by which the poor worm Jacob—whom God has thus made strong—prevails, by laying hold upon himself, declaring, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." But let us be most careful to observe here. It is not in the flesh this living power or living strength is found, nor in the fleshly mind, no: but it is as Paul blessedly expresses it in the 3rd of Ephesians, ver. 16, "That He would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit IN THE INNER MAN." It is in the new man. It is the new life, and the faculties which belong to, and are inseparable from this new life, which receive strength and power to put forth this strength, by the word. The "Woman believe me," came with the same life-giving, and strength-communicating power to this poor woman as the first word, as the "Go, call thy husband and come!" only with this difference, the first word called her out of death, and made her a new-creature in Christ Jesus. This second word called into exercise her living powers, and by the power of the word Jesus attracted her new heart towards Himself.

But, how blessed is the final full revelation which Christ made of Himself to the woman. "I that speak unto thee am He." What a "loose her and let her go" was here. No chains of sin could

now hold her, no cares of the world confine her new spirit; up flows the fountain of life, overflow the streams of love, out gush the fruits of faith. She leaves her waterpot behind her; she is a new creature; old things are passed away; she is actuated by a new life, a new love, a new nature. What a change do we behold in the woman! Half an hour ago with a sullen, guilt-defying air, dead in sin, and utterly indifferent to her dead condition, she moodily came out of the city of Sychar, bearing her waterpot towards the well. Behold her now! with breathless haste she is returning into the city, empty-handed, but with a full heart, her eyes gleaming with delight, her countenance beaming with joy, her spirit filled with holy love, and her tongue actively engaged in calling upon her fellow-sinners to "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

Stay, woman! the people will think you are mad.

Nay, she cannot stay now, she cannot stop to reason now. Like Paul, impelled by the newly-lighted fire which burns within, the love of Christ constraining, bearing her onward; she too, having the Son of God REVEALED IN her, immediately she confers not with flesh and blood (Gal. i. 16), but onward presses; yes, leaving the waterpot, the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and her fleshly notions of religion! "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," we behold the inevitable consequences of the gift of eternal life! She "presses, onward, upward, towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 13).

Was this woman an enthusiast? In our day she would be treated as such. But no, she had passed a mighty change. She came out of the city a slave to sin—the devil's willing subject. She returned to Sychar, eternally delivered from the power and condemnation of sin. A new creature, having a new life, a new nature in which she was now "made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." By what process? By the GIFT of the well of living water-by which gift she was taken out of death and put into life; or, as the Apostle Paul expresses it, "Delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. i. 13). Or, was it the mere effect of the circumstances of the case, and the words spoken acting on the woman's reason, and so producing a change of mind? It was either this, or else it was the effect of a supernatural power, put forth by the Divine Speaker in the bestowal in, and by his words of that GIFT, to which he referred when He said. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into Everlasting life."

We have seen the first-fruits of the springing up of this precious "fountain of life." Will that woman return to her sin, and live therein, that grace may abound, because she has the promise that the life shall ever live; that having it, she can never thirst in hell for a drop of water to cool her tongue? Impossible! The new life contains a new nature, that nature is holy as God is holy. The flesh may and will lust against it, but "Sin shall not have dominion over you"--" Grace reigns!" There is something more here, as we shall more fully further on than can be found in those uncertain fountains of good-works, philosophy or reason. He that is joined to the Lord by this ever-living, ever-pure, ever-glorious GIFT, is one spirit, a partaker of the Divine nature; and as a new creature in Christ, it is as impossible for him to love sin, take pleasure in sin, or live in and find his happiness in the world, as it would be for those who have passed over the Jordan to come back to earth, and seek fresh pleasures here. No; the effect of the springing up of this life within a man, is to carry his thoughts and affections up and out of himself into the Person and fulness of our most glorious Christ. And a knowledge of this precious living union in oneness of life and blessedness in Christ, bears the same fruits now as it did in the days of holy Paul. It made him rejoice in tribulation, which is more than submission! And because he knew that as a new creature he was already in possession of eternal life, and that in that life he lived in Christ, and Christ in him, so that He could say, "To me to live is Christ." He tells us, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. iv. 11).

Beware, my beloved brother, of drawing from these most precious truths, an inference which our cunning adversary (the devil), will endeavour to puff into the mind, namely, that because we are by virtue of our life-union with Jesus partakers of the divine nature, that therefore we are, in any way, partakers of the divine essence, to affirm which is at once blasphemy and absurd. Nevertheless, the Lord the Spirit confirm your noble minds, in the most blessed and soul-establishing doctrine of the reality of this spiritual life, so that by faith we may believe "the record that God gave of his Son." "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life" (1 John 11, 12); let the state of his natural mind be what it may.

The second figure to which we desired to direct attention in this lecture, but which we must pass over to our next, is that given us by our dear Lord, as recorded in Matthew, chap. 13, ver. 33, viz., concerning the "leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal."

Again, dear little faith, our parting word, Art thou alive?
Afraid!

But why afraid?

Oh, it involves so much! I see if I am truly alive from the dead, that all blessings both for time and eternity must be mine; but I feel so much of my own unworthiness, and I feel so much of the power of unbelief, that I tremble when I attempt to grasp the prize.

The Lord be praised that you see the glory of this life; it will add a thousand attractive properties to what you have already heard of Christ; it will constrain you to follow hard after him; and knowing what you do of Him, you will never be content until you hear Him say, "I that speak unto thee am He." How blessedly shall it then appear, that every word of conviction, every little word of encouragement, every word producing living feeling, which has either drawn or inspired thy heart, ever since thou hast felt an anxiety about thy eternal welfare, has been spoken by the same glorious Person, through the dear Comforter in thy heart; fear not, soon like Joseph to his weeping brother Benjamin when he removed that mask of sternness, like that which now seems to hide the loveliness of Christ's countenance from thee, He shall say, "I am Joseph thy brother." Thou hast been afflicted in heart, in distress of spirit; thou hast feared thou wouldst be cast off, and cast away at last, according to thy felt-deservings. Know then, poor soul, it is my life within thee that has been opening up these things in thy heart, which have caused thee this fear. It is my light that has shown thee what thou art in thyself; couldst thou have seen the meaning of every cloud that has overshadowed thee, or heard the voice of every rod that has afflicted thee, all would have spoken but one word, and that the same by which I now unbind thy bonds of death and set thee free—"I that speak unto thee am He!"

His peace be with you all. Amen.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST?

(No. 6.)

" For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21.

In the last verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis we read, "And God saw everything that He had made; and, behold, it was very good." Man, as at first created, had a spiritual life given him, in which he was capable of delighting himself, and communing with the Almighty; but this spiritual life was held by Adam, and by all his posterity in him, upon the condition of obedience. The nature of this life, it is beyond our power to discuss; but the issue of this life is revealed to us in God's holy word. "Sin entered, and death by sin;" and we see the effects of death. It was a REAL DEATH; so real that the fallen ones could no longer endure that which before constituted their chief happiness, namely, communion with God: for, mark the result. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day [not in the fierceness of his anger]; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden." How real was this death! By the folly of this act it appears that not only did their LOVE to God perish in this death, but also their KNOW-LEDGE of God. How descriptive of the folly entailed upon our nature, and manifested in the first dead works of these our first parents, is the language of the Holy Ghost by the Psalmist (Psal. 53), "The fool hath said in his heart, No God! . . . Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" What astonishing folly to think of hiding from the gaze of the Omnipresent behind a tree! Yet death is so totally dead in sin and folly still, that every man by nature, until he is called up out of death into spiritual life, is daily and hourly dealing thus with Jehovah. Not to men of the world only do we refer; for all the religion professed in the world, which has not the life of God for its essence, is but the reproduction of the same dead folly which led Adam and Eve to deal with God as though He too, had become by their suicide, altogether such an one as themselves.

[THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 15.

A man dead in sin can adopt a religious system, and become a happy professor, as easily as he can take up the study of any science: and this often perplexes the minds of those who are beginning to seek the Lord, because they find now that they are beginning to live Christ, they have no controll over frames and feelings, so as to

be happy at will.

The life of Christ in a man makes him most sensitive to the power of Satan, and to the wiles by which he is ever lying in wait to deceive. It also produces in a man the keenest apprehension of the solemn and boundless importance of eternal things. Such a man feels that true faith is the gift of God, and that to attain that assurance which above all things he desires, he must have Christ so personally revealed in his heart by the Spirit, that he can say without doubt, "I know in whom I have believed"-" I know that my Redeemer liveth." And before he is brought up to live here in the blessed assurance of the mercy, he knows what it is to be kept perhaps for many years in the Lord's stripping-room, where, often in a state of terror of soul, on account of the searching and idol crushing process he passes through, while he is "suffering the loss of all things," he is perplexed to see many settle down around him in a profession without apparently any exercise of soul at all as to the genuineness of their interest in 'Christ. They hear the word and anon with joy receive it! With the outward ear they hear of Christ; with a dead faith they believe in Him, like as they believe in Alexander the great; and with a dead love they love Him, just as they do the immortal Howard, for the incomparable beauty of his character, as naturally considered. What should hinder these from settling down in a delusion? Satan will not disturb them, he knows they are secure in his pious trap. They are satisfied with themselves and their profession. Nothing disturbs such in life or in death; excepting, perhaps, that their tempers become a little ruffled, if a living one ventures to hint to them their fear, that all the glitter of their piety is but that tinsel of death, which is to be found existing to a great extent "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Self-examination as to the performance of duties, is a common and pleasing occupation with such, even if it involves a little penance for short comings; but to apply the fire to their tinsel to test its purity, is that which never enters the dead one's thoughts.

However, whether in a profession or not, what a mighty change takes place the moment the kingdom of heaven is set up in a man's soul! From the moment that kingdom comes in power, self-decep-

tion, the still indifference of death is at an end; and no more will peace reign and rule in that soul, until Christ, the mighty King, is revealed in the heart, the hope of glory! Yes, it is a *real* kingdom, standing in a *real* life, and producing real, unmistakable, living effects. It is this, as set before us in the parable of Jesus, respecting the leaven hid in the measures of meal, we contemplate to-day.

"Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven [Luke reports it 'The kingdom of God;' both therefore in this case signify the same thing] is like unto LEAVEN, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt. xiii. 33). This parable may have a double spiritual meaning, but while it may refer to the spread of the Gospel in this dispensation by the ministry of the Spirit—yet its more direct reference seems to be to the working of Divine life in the Lord's children; and we know of no scriptural figure which more beautifully sets forth the nature, properties, and reality of this life, than the leaven in the meal.

Moreover, Christ expressly tells us (Luke xvii. 21), that this kingdom of God cometh not with outward show or by observation; it does not stand in the outward and visible profession a man makes; nor does it consist in mere moral virtues; for these, in great perfection, often grow and shine even where the cross of Christ is held in contempt. But, "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Now we are sure it is not so by nature; therefore it must be by gift, and gift is grace. The kingdom is the leaven—the leaven is the life—the life is Christ; therefore, to be in Christ, is to be in his kingdom, and to have Christ in us, is to have the kingdom of God within us; and this is to "live Christ."

Again, the Holy Ghost by Paul tells us, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). What is the sum of this testimony? We have it in another, "Christ is all and in all." This life, which is this leaven, which is this kingdom of God, is not that which is connected with our natural senses; but is wholly spiritual; it is Christ; for Christ is our righteousness; Christ is our peace; and the knowledge by blessed revelation of Christ in the heart, is joy; and all IN the Holy Ghost, for He is the Spirit of life.

But once more, Paul says, when writing to the Corinthians, "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will; and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in POWER" (1 Cor. iv. 19). What is the power? What is it that enables a man to walk and speak, to feel and think? Is it not LIFE? Thus, then, we under-

stand the Apostle, "The kingdom of God standeth, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit" (Rom. vii. 6). And having the Spirit, we have life—we have Christ, and walk in the newness of life (Rom. vi. 4), which is to walk in Christ; and He has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." How glorious is this power! It is power to feel; power to see; power to know Christ; power to desire; power to follow after Him; power to lay hold upon Him; power to become the sons of God; power henceforth to say, "To me to live is Christ;" which is to live as He lives; "Not according to a carnal (or fleshly) commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (Heb. vii. 16). The leaven, then, is the power, and the power is the life, and "Christ is all!" This is a real thing, and not as some call it, a principle merely, or a state of mind.

But let us next observe, this leaven, or life, our dear Lord tells us "a woman took." Now, the word took here, is the same as we have in the 1st chapter of John, verse the 12th, "As many as RECEIVED Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." And again, it is the same word as in the 11th of Hebrews, the 35th verse, "Women RECEIVED their dead raised to life again." Now this we conceive will simplify the parable, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven—or life—which a woman RECEIVED." How received? Just as the woman of Samaria received life, by hearing the voice of the Son of God. Just as Lazarus received his natural life again, when the voice of Jesus called him out of death into life. Of neither of these could it be said, properly, that they "took" life, as active agents, but they received, as passive recipients. So this woman, as a free-grace gift, RECEIVED the leaven—or life.

How large an amount of the daily sorrow, depression of spirit, and conflict of soul, to which the little faiths in the Lord's dear family are subject, arises from the absence of a clear perception of this simple truth; that all that which is spiritual in them, takes its rise from, and has its being in, this free gift of God—this eternal life. Yes, my poor perplexed brother, that deep soul-grief which bursts forth from thy heart in groanings which cannot be uttered, because of the hidden boiling-up of the dross of corruption in thy nature, of which the accuser of the brethren takes malicious advantage, often appealing to thee in secret as he points to the filthy scum, and says, "Can it be, that God dwells here?" All this is only felt by thee, in its exceeding sinfulness, because of that holy life which, as the hidden leaven, is working in thy inner man. It is because thou art a new creature—made such by the reception of God's living kingdom

in thy heart—that thy feelings are so acutely sensitive to the pollution arising from the working of evil thoughts in thine afflicted bosom. Now mark, dear troubled one! there was a time, which most of us can remember, when these things over which we now groan being burdened, had their working in our hearts, but left no sting behind. They came, they passed, they were forgotten. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life, reigned in death. What has produced this living change? Sin in its dominion—sin in the love of it, has been eternally dethroned in thy heart. The remembrance of its reign distracts thy soul; its power in thy flesh is still felt. Satan says it shall rise and reign again! His lie is listened to, and terror at the thought possesses thy troubled mind. But, the Lord help thee, dear little faith, whatever the thorn in thy flesh may be, to come into the sanctuary, and to weigh with those true balances, and take thy account according to Paul's divine arithmetic, "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 10). "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" and so-drawing thy conclusions-comparing thy present condition in spiritual life, with thy former condition in spiritual death. Thus, thou shalt find that all thy deepest exercises arise to thee, because thou art eternally out of spiritual death, and eternally in spiritual life, delivered from the reigning power of sin, and under the blessed dominion of King Jesus. "That as sin hath reigned IN DEATH [not unto death-this is an obscure translation], even so might grace reign, through righteousness, IN ETERNAL LIFE, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 21). Couldst thou, my fellow-pilgrim, form thy estimate of things, upon these true and simple grounds of spiritual life and blessedness in Christ Jesus, thy very distresses, which arise from the feeling of evil as it struggles in its vain attempts for the mastery in the flesh, would suggest to thee a sweet song instead of a sigh of unbelieving bitterness; and thou wouldest take thy harp from the willows, and warble forth:

> "Herein let self be all abased, And sov'reign love alone confessed; This be my song thro' all the road, That born I am, yea, born of God."

The Lord help thee to watch the holy, self-abasing workings of the leaven of life; and at all times to remember, that if thou hast these peculiar feelings, which stamp the Lord's own dear ones as "a peculiar people," it is because "The kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU."

We next observe, the child of God having received this life, set forth by the "leaven," it is said to be hidden in three measures of

meal. The word translated "hid," signifies to enclose one thing in another, or to mix two things together. Paul gives us a most important testimony respecting this mixing, in his Epistle to the Hebrews—"But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. iv. 2). But this woman who received the leaven, mixed it in three measures of meal; and, although it may be contrary to the systematic teaching of our anti-spiritual and literalizing commentators, we rejoice to discover vast beauty in these THREE measures.

We have abundant evidence around us, that the intellectual profession which forms a large portion of that which passes current for Christianity in our day, has its origin in the flesh, and not in the "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh;" and all religion, however specious and active in outward zeal it may be, if it is the offspring of the flesh, can never rise higher than its source. Moreover, it is a solemn truth, however unpalatable to human nature, that "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8). Why cannot? Because, as Paul expressly tells us, that while in the flesh all we can do is "to bring forth fruit unto death" (Rom. vii. 5). So that if there be found among those who having been deluded by the father of lies, are building on the fleshly sands of intellectual profession, a certain kind of faith, a certain kind of hope, and a certain kind of love, they are but fruits of a dead system; which, like opium, may be most soothing and delightful in its first effects, but which deceitfully, because softly and smoothly, bears the unconscious victim onward into a vortex more terrible, if possible, than the issues of the outward gross sins of the flesh. Alas! alas! while we look forward and rejoice in the coming glories that shall arise out of the mighty missionary efforts of our day; yet when we mark the sing-care-away cheerfulness of the merry builders of this structure, which God shall yet use for his glory, we can but turn back and look at much such a scene which was enacted four thousand years ago, when they, who scoffed at Noah and his God, yet helped to build an ark for the special blessing of the family they despised. The flood came! doubtless thousands imploringly pleaded for a place of safety then in Noah's ark, and urged their claim by what they had done in building it. So the flood is again approaching! How shall it then be? Hear the testimony of Jesus, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." How

solemn is the question then, What is my faith? My hope? My love? Take away all that from my religion which it is evident may exist where the life of God is not in the soul, what is there left? All that man can see must be cast aside in this inquiry. It is plain that many Unitarians and Papists are as bright examples as any we can produce, of purity of life, benevolence of heart, earnest self-denying zeal for the conversion of others, devout and steadfast adherence to both practice and profession in every doctrine and duty they hold to be right. These things are not to be put in the scale; for, although wherever the grace of God flows, these must follow; yet these are not the fruits by which a living tree is known from a dead one. These may all shine where the faith and hope are dead, and the love, but fleshly love, and not the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost (Rom. v. 5). What then is the great criterion? The leaven hid in the meal!

Every regenerated child of God has a measure of faith, a measure of hope, and a measure of love; and these are contained in a certain vessel which is variously called "The new man"—"The new creature"—"The hidden man of the heart;" and this vessel which contains God's free-grace gifts—the graces of the Spirit, as some call them, is altogether distinct from whatever we bring into the world with us, by nature; there is no change made in the original nature of the house, but a new inhabitant takes possession of it, and claims entire controul over all its affairs, and properties are given to this new inhabitant, which enable him not only to assert his dominion, but to maintain it. So that every living child of God as he comes up day by day out of his continual conflict, can sing victoriously with the Apostle, "And now ABIDETH faith, hope, love, these three."

How is it that neither the devil, nor sin, nor the world, in all their combinations with the "Old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22), can drive these three champions out of the heart, nor cause them to yield in the battle? But like David's first three valiant ones, let who may give way in the contest, these three still ABIDE. Joy, peace, patience, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, temperance, may be all put to flight while the battle waxes fierce and furiously; but still abideth faith, hope, love—these three. Why? The leaven of life is there! Yes, and however small the measure is, it alters nothing; the property that gives stability, and causeth it ever to abide, finds room to work in little faith, as well as in great faith; in the bud of hope, as well as in the full-blown grace; in the first bubble of the desire of love, as

well as in the broad waters thereof, which cannot be passed over.

Unleavened faith knows nothing of abiding or stability; unleavened hope, like that of the hypocrite, shall perish like a sapless tree; unleavened love, like the passion of a harlot, shall turn to deadly enmity the moment it discovers that the Christ of God has no love in his heart for any but the bride whom his Father gave Him before the foundation of the world; and that it was for her alone He shed his precious blood.

The leaven then, which is the life—and Christ Himself is the Life—is that which gives reality and power to faith, hope, and love; and these are the three measures of heavenly meal in which it is hidden, or with which it is mixed by them, who through the Spirit of God receive it.

How wide a field for contemplation here opens, in tracing the ceaseless workings of this spiritual leaven! It is, moreover, in the operations and tendencies of this most blessed gift of God, we shall discover its reality, and also its distinctness, from all things natural; and shall find, that the possession of it, is that which makes all the difference between a dead professor and a living child of God; between one who, having a form of godliness, denies the living power thereof; and one who can rejoice with Paul, that "To me to live is Christ." But our space compels us to cast our observations upon the operations and tendencies of this precious leaven into our next lecture.

The peace of God, even Jesus, be with you all. Amen.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST?

(No. 7.)

" For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."-Phil. i. 21.

SUCH are the operations and tendencies of true spiritual life, that wherever it exists, like the working of the leaven in the meal, its effects must be traceable. Mistakes about these effects lead to very wrong conclusions, especially in the beginnings of the manifestation of this life in the babes in Christ; nevertheless, our mistakes about it alter none of the glorious circumstances of immortal blessedness which stand in inseparable connection with the state of one who is truly LIVING CHRIST. There is the life, and it is utterly impossible that we can be living Christ, and yet remain unconscious of the operations and tendencies which are ever present as the manifestations of that eternal life, in which and by which we are "joined to the Lord and one Spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17).

Be not hasty in thy bitter conclusions, my beloved but deeply-exercised brother; because unbelief whispers in thy heart, "Then I am out of the secret! For instead of lively faith, lively hope, and lively love, I seem in my own feelings to be 'twice dead, and plucked up by the roots.' Wearied and cast down on account of the hardness of the way, the rebellion of my ungovernable heart, and the darkness of my bewildered mind. Indeed, the only lively experiences I can trace out, are those lively abominations which are ever struggling for the mastery, and working sometimes with terrific

vigour in 'the chambers of imagery within.'"

There are two mistakes at the foundation of thy conclusion, my brother. First, thou forgettest that we must as truly live to feel pain as to feel joy. And secondly, thou art looking into the wrong place for thy spiritual life and liveliness; thou canst not look at two things at one and the same time, while thou art contemplating thyself as thou art by nature in thyself all corruption, Christ, who alone is thy life, is out of sight. What says the Holy Spirit by Paul to thee, poor troubled one? How exactly does the dear Comforter meet thee upon thy own terms! Thou complainest that thou art dead in thy feelings! "Yes," says the Spirit, "YE ARE DEAD"—

[THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 16.

it is right that ye FEEL yourselves, in yourselves, thus dead—"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." But, now mark, what the Spirit says in connection with this: "If ye then be risen with Christ [in new-creature-ship, in newness of life], seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections upon things above, and not on things on the earth" (Col. iii. 1—3).

"Ah!" says one, "this is to be ever dwelling in anticipation upon the glories of heaven, the pearly gates, the golden streets, and the crystal river which await us in the New Jerusalem, in paradise above; but alas! what are all these distant great and grand things to me if I have neither part nor lot in the matter! How can I fix my meditations on these things, pressed down as I am by present burdens, and especially harassed with ten thousand fears, that the little hope I have cherished in days that are passed, was but the hope of a hypocrite, which is now being cut down that it may perish? These things in their fearful consequences, swallow up my thoughts."

The glory of heaven as a place, will not avail to lift up the heart's affections, and carry them out of self and above the world. As well might we go to that broken-hearted watcher, and attempt to cheer her, at the bed-side of him who is more than all the world to her, as she gazes in hopeless bitterness on the ebbing-out of the tide of his precious life, by talking to her about the sprightly birds and the gay blossoms of a summer garden! Her hope is dying out; without him all that is beautiful becomes a blank. But go to her, show her, that low as the tide has ebbed away, and blank and dismal as the scene appears, yet her treasure is not lost! For now at this lowest point, show her, that the last ripple which softly rolled in upon the strand, flowed higher than the one which sunk beneath it. Show her that although the tide is out, yet that the ocean is as full as ever, and that now the tide begins to flow again! change! She forgets in a moment herself and her misery! Hope grasps the great reality, and by its living power anticipates the joy which awaits her when life shall have reached again its flood, in her beloved one.

Now just like this is the experience of the Lord's exercised children, who, by the teaching of the Spirit, are brought to feelingly know the momentous nature of the issue of the question, as to whether they are truly "living Christ;" and therefore, such are ever watching for the working of the life of God within. What is heaven as a place to such? While they can find, or think they can find, nothing but death stamped upon all that they had cherished as

tokens by which they hoped to prove they were heaven-bound. The tide of their comforts, all their joy, has ebbed away. The warm glow of love and expectation, in which they seemed to triumph, while little faith clung with a firm grasp to the promise, and hope could cast anchor in the immutable faithfulness of the Promiser, under the cheering influences of the sweet testimonies of the Spirit, has all receded, and left them looking in dismay upon a barren waste of changing sands, a rugged rocky mass of unfeeling dulness and stupidity; or a black muddy teeming deposit of filthy corruption.

Now we know that wherever the true leaven of life is, whenever the tide of spiritual enjoyment is out, this more or less will be the condition of that which remains; all of which stands in the flesh, which in itself "profiteth nothing" (John vi. 63). But hence arises the question. Are we to judge after the sight of our eyes, when our life in the enjoyment of it is thus at low-water-mark? No. To do so is to form an altogether erroneous estimate of that life which in its fulness and unchanging blessedness, is centred in the Person of our most glorious Christ.

Christ is our Life! ALWAYS the same, like a boundless ocean, ever full, ever grand, ever glorious. Our joy and peace in believing, like the tides, which alter nothing as to the quantity of the mighty exhaustless deep; nor can in the least degree disturb or affect the profound abyss in which its deeps repose, but only expose, as they retire, the rugged rocks, the changing unstable sands, or the dark corrupt mud, which are in truth as much there when out of sight, but which are forgotten for a season by the simple one, who judges by sense while the green waters roll over them, while the tide is at its flood.

But what avails it to be ever brooding over the muddy deposit, which we hate and abhor, but which will, nevertheless, remain to blacken our prospects? Men do not so in nature, they say, black as it now appears; wait but the turn of the tide, and it will surely flow again; all shall again be out of sight, and the beautiful wave come dancing over the now-uncomely flats again.

"But what can I do in such a case?" says the earnest troubled one. "I am so greatly distressed on account of what I see and feel, that I cannot believe I am a child of God."

But you could not see and feel what you do if you were spiritually dead. It is because you love and long after the spring-tide of joy and peace in believing, you feel so unhappy while you cannot get the living waters to flow over, and drown your miseries out of your sight. Then the Lord help you to perceive the true state of the

matter in question. Your misery on account of what you see in your flesh, is as good an evidence of the presence of spiritual life, as your joy can be, while for a little season faith and hope and love are manifestly full of life and holy vigour.

Moreover, it is to this point, that you may be brought to understand in your renewed minds the simplicity of your completeness in Christ, independently of all your feelings in, and knowledge of the utter depravity of the flesh, that the Holy Comforter by his blessed teaching is daily bringing you step by step. Yes, even by exposing these very mysteries of base iniquity, which are again and again opened to your view, when the tide of manifest comfort and enjoyment is out; and the whole of the Spirit's most precious teaching, by which we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, is to this end, that we may be led to understand, that wherever this spiritual leaven of eternal life is found, its operations are wholly confined to the new creature. It is the new wine, which is put into a new bottle. The flesh profiteth nothing, although its power is subdued; and the tendencies of this holy leaven are always towards its heavenly source.

What, then, is the blessed privilege of a poor sin-burdened, helpless seeker after Jesus? Not certainly to stand at the brink of the ocean when at low-water-mark, and to turn his back upon that boundless fulness of all grace in a precious Christ, and contemplate only the sands and the rock, or that which is worst of all, the filthy mud of corruption, and to wring his hands in despair on account of what he beholds. Oh, no! for while he thus feeds his unbelief, he is placing the new-man in bonds. But what is his daily privilege? Rather by the Spirit's sweet enablings, to turn from all he discovers in self, to fill him with sorrow and disgust, and to follow the receding tide, low as it may sink, fixing the eye of faith upon the broad expanse, and thus contemplate the unchanging fulness of our life and blessedness in the Person and grace of our most glorious Christ. It was to this point of holy teaching and blessed living, the Spirit had brought Paul when he could write, "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

It is while we are thus privileged to stand looking out and away from self, that faith lays hold of the promise, "I will see you again." Hope plumes her wings, and joy itself makes ready to enter into rest and peace upon the rising again of her consolation in the return of the tide of living communion, by which love, joy, peace, hope.

and faith, are borne upwards for a season, and sweetly float above the reach of all earthly things. And though we may be kept long waiting before the tide returns again, so as to carry us feelingly above ourselves; yet the blessedness of growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our life, which is nothing short of growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is manifested by our resolutely turning our backs upon self, and waiting the Lord's return according to Paul's blessed rule above-mentioned. It is evident however, that we are acting in direct violation of this rule, while we are turning our backs upon Christ our Ocean of life, and contemplating the cheerless waste, the enemy's stronghold, whether it be the world or the flesh.

Dear Mr. Hart gives us a summary of the same experience, excepting that he uses the ocean in a figurative sense, very opposite to that which we have done:—

When, like the restless ocean
Our hearts cast up uncleanness,
Flood after flood,
With mire and mud,
And all is foul within us:
When love is cold and languid,
And diffrent passions shake us;
When hope decays,
And God delays,
And seems to quite forsake us.

Then to maintain the battle,
With soldier-like behaviour;
To keep the field,
And never yield,
But firmly eye the Saviour:
To trust his gracious promise,
Thus hard beset with evil:
This, this is faith,
Will conquer death,
And overcome the devil.

"By faith ye stand." Now, it is not an act of faith to stand gazing upon our corrupt selves, but it is a continuous act of faith to be ever "looking unto Jesus;" and to bring us to this position, is the design of the Lord in so arranging the ebbings and flowings of our spiritual life, in the comfortable apprehension of the same; now giving a high tide of sweet fellowship and communion with our God and Father in the Person of his well-beloved Son; then, rolling back the overflowings of his mighty love, and leaving our feelingly-deserted souls as barren of all comfortable frames, joyful anticipa-

tions, and out-flowings of sweet gratitude, love and praise, as the strand, or the rocks, or the black mud are, when the tide is out, barren of that vegetation which can support animal life. And all this in strict accordance with the ordering of that most glorious covenant, in which infinite wisdom has arranged all these things, in every minutia in their "working together," to produce the greatest possible amount of good to each individual member of the body of Christ, to the babe as well as to the father, in the family of God; and to bring the greatest possible amount of glory to the unerring

conductor of the grand though mysterious scheme.

Dear troubled child of God, you shall find after all your watchings of the ebbings and flowings which your life passes through from day to day, that under the teachings of the blessed Comforter, you are by these things growing in grace, and in the knowledge and understanding of things which must eternally differ; so that, as the Lord leads you on in the experience of these changes, you shall be brought to the conclusion, that the first and chief inference you have to draw from what is discoverable in the flesh, is this, that to see and to feel, as you do daily, such a multitude of things in yourself to cause distress and dismay, and yet over which after all your prayers, watchings and groanings, you have no controul, is an everabiding evidence that you are not dead in sin, or seeking your pleasures from the flesh in its vanities and lusts; and therefore, as there are but two conditions into which all mankind are divided, it follows YOU MUST BE passed over from, or out of death into life, and that life, ETERNAL life, which nothing can kill or destroy; because Christ, the mighty God Himself, personally is that Life, and He has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." You may sigh now, and not be able to lay hold of the solid abiding substance which such a knowledge under the Spirit's ministry, conveys into the renewed mind; but it will come by degrees. The Lord fix your heart upon it! You never doubt that the tide naturally will rise again? No. But why? Because you know that it is according to the nature of things it should ebb and flow; that it has never failed yet, and therefore, you know it will not fail now. Just so, you shall understand, that to feel pain, to know the difference spiritually between darkness and light, coldness and warmth, purity and corruption, worldliness of heart and heavenly mindedness, is according to the nature and part of the sure effects of the in-dwelling of this spiritual life in the soul; and therefore as positive a token that you are living in this life as you can possess in this time-state. And now, it is as we are brought experimentally to understand these things; we shall find, as we affirmed at starting, that it is utterly impossible that we can be LIVING CHRIST, and yet remain unconscious of the operations and tendencies which are ever present as the manifestations of that eternal life, in which and by which we are "joined to the Lord and one Spirit."

Moreover, as we thus grow up into the knowledge of Christ our Life, we shall also understand, how true, and how blessed, is that testimony of the Holy Ghost's, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." This precious knowledge must necessarily lead us out of self and self-seeking; and the further we are thus led, the clearer shall we apprehend the fulness and importance of the Spirit's injunction, "If ye then be risen with Christ [and ye are taught to know that ye are new-creatures, and therefore risen with Him, by the effects of life, manifested in its ebbings and flowings in the new-man], seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Now, what is it to seek "those things which are above?" Not to seek heaven as a place! No. But seek to live by faith in the apprehension of the unchangeable blessedness of thy standing in Christ Jesus; accepted at all times in the Beloved, unsearchably rich in Christ; having all fulness of grace for time-needs, and all fulness of glory for eternal happiness in Christ. "Set your affections on things above," above all changes; above all thy ebbings and flowings; above all thy best experiences in enjoyment of these things now; for they are upon the earth, and soon pass away, and leave thee in thyself as miserable as ever. Set thy affections on things above, which ebb not, but are ever, and shall be eternally inexhaustibly the same, ever full, ever free, ever glorious! "And not upon things on Cobserve, it does not say of the earth, but not upon things on the earth; things on the earth are all mutable; but things above, where Christ sitteth, our Head, in possession of all glory on our behalf, are immutable." The Lord bring up thy noble mind, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, thus to live above self, and out of self, in newness of life, content to be dead, that your life being hid in Christ, you may go on daily singing, "To me to live is Christ,

We must add, however, another remark respecting the operations and tendency of the leaven hid in the meal. It is obvious, if it signifies the life of our faith, the life of our hope, and the life of our love; or that which distinguishes each from dead, inoperative counterfeits; it cannot be that, which some would persuade us it is, namely, a property working in the flesh, which by degrees leavens

and to die is gain."

the whole lump, and transforms the flesh into a holy mass. In other words, the working of this leaven is not progressive sanctification.

The old-Adam-nature in the children of God is of the earth, earthy, and shall ever remain so; it is also in combination with the world and the devil, and thus stands the co-partnership, "The world, the flesh, and the devil." The flesh, then, is of the world. But "this is the victory that overcometh the world [and therefore overcometh the flesh], even your faith." It is one thing to overcome an enemy, another thing to change his nature, and convert him into a friend; this, however, will never be accomplished with the flesh or old-Adam-nature, which is to be crucified, not changed. How blessed is it, then, to know, and to feel too, that the precious leaven of life operating in faith, gives it overcoming power. Hence are our daily victories.

Now mark, dearly beloved, that while we speak of this life-under whatever figure it may be-it is Christ Himself in his personal presence as our God, and our glory, and our eternal Life. It is of the utmost importance that we never lose sight of this; because, it is only as by the Spirit's teaching our minds are brought up to the apprehension of this fundamental truth, that we feel ourselves to be truly strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might-unconquerable by sin, Satan, or the world. It is only as this most precious soul-establishing truth is realized, that we can fully see the glory of that simple testimony of the Holy Ghost's by the Apostle, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12). What is it but Christ as our Life, giving power and energy to faith, to lay hold of the hope set before us, and by the living power of love, causing us to cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart? It is of the greatest use and comfort to a child of God to be brought to understand the simplicity of the working of this precious life, in which he lives, and moves, and has his spiritual being; because as he discovers the unchangeable and inexhaustible nature of the source of all that which renders him victorious in all his daily conflicts, how cheerfully, morning by morning, will he buckle on his armour, singing to himself as he looks either within or without to survey his enemies, "Ye are of God, little children, and have [already in your Head, and already in your faith], overcome them; because, greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4). The peace of God, even Jesus, be with you all. Amen.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST?

(No. 8.)*

" For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21.

THE answer which the Saviour gave to the astonished Nicodemus, stands unalterably true at this hour. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." The fact that this truth is opposed to the prevailing systems of the day, which teach that by a certain process the flesh may be made to bear spiritual fruit, does not alter the real state of the case, as will be found by millions of deluded ones when Christ appears. How solemn, then, becomes our question, "Am I LIVING CHRIST in the Spirit; or am I living a system in the flesh?" And the question becomes the more important, since every day furnishes abundant evidence of the absence of that true spiritual, soulelevating life, which produces deadness to all things short of personal communion with Jesus, in the wide-spread systems which obtain The fire of missionary zeal, be it never forgotten, can be fed by fleshly influences. Yea, it is a most startling thought, that it is possible to be actuated by such zeal in hell. "I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke xvi. 27). I mention these things not to damp missionary ardour, or with the view of furnishing those who are indifferent to the wonderful progress which of late years has been made in the spread of the word of God, with a pretext for their indifference; but my object is to point to the solemn fact, that the presence of this zeal in a person, is no proof that they are LIVING CHRIST! Take away, however, this fire from the religion of great numbers, how much of warm life would remain? Is it not true, that the bustle of the religion of our stirring day, is that which gives to it its chief zest?

It is not the flesh which is new-born; nor is it our old-Adamnature changed by degrees; but it is a new and independent life which is put within us, in which, by the power of living faith, we conquer ourselves; and as Paul says, "Crucify the old man with his affections [or as in the margin, passions] and lusts," and thus

overcome the world.

THE GOSPEL CCTTAGE LECTURER, No. 17.

The beloved John lays it down as a foundation truth (1 John v. 4), "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." But what is it that is born of God? Not our sinful selves, for we feel daily that here stands the grand centre of the power of the world. What is that world which is without us? It is entangling doubtless—but how so? Only because of the world of iniquity we carry about within us. Could we kill the flesh, or the old-Adam law of sin which is in our members, would the world or would Satan find any power left in us, by which we could be brought into captivity? No. Self, then, is the centre of this world which must be; and, blessed be our glorious Christ is, daily, and shall be finally, conquered, by his life-giving power and energy dwelling in, and animating the newman-working in the little measure of faith, the little measure of hope, and the little measure of love, which form the active properties or graces of the new-man. Therefore, John joins these two points together, "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith; therefore, to CHRIST ALONE shall be due ALL THE GLORY of all our triumphs. Otherwise, if it could be by a faith which in ANY DEGREE depended on our faithfulness or energy that we conquer, then, some, at least, of the glory would be due to ourselves. But Paul tells us, that by the grace or gift of God, he was what he was. What, then, is this great grace-gift of God, which contains such fulness of all blessedness, that he who possesses it, is now, and shall be eter-• nally, " MORE THAN A CONQUEROR?" May the Holy Comforter seal it upon thy heart, my anxious brother, and then thou shalt read in it the source of all thy deep-felt anxiety about spiritual realities! "And this is the record, that God hath given to us ETERNAL LIFT. and this life is in his Son. He that HATH the Son, HATH LIFE; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life" (1 John v. 12). How blessed the conclusion! The very life which discovers to us our enemies, gives also energy to the arm, and edge to the sword, by which we prevail over them. Cheer up, then, fellow-soldier! The Lord help thee to fix a single eye upon our glorious Captain, and keep step to our spiritual march, "Unto Him that loved us. and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

"And here's our point of rest,
Though hard the battle seem;
Our Captain stood the fiery test,
And we shall stand in Him."

But we must draw now towards the conclusion of the subject. We have so far endeavoured to point out the reality—the individuality—the distinctness from that which is natural, and the operating properties of the life we have as new-creatures in Christ Jesus. We must now go back to the foundation upon which all this rests; and then look at the provision which is made for the sustenance and eternal blessedness of this life.

On a review of what I have said, I am constrained to bow my head with the prophet of old, while I contemplate the judgment which all must pronounce upon me who are strangers to the operations of the life of Christ within them. "Then said I, Ah Lord God! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?" (Ezek. xx. 49).

Nevertheless, to my living brother in our unspeakable blessedness ineternal union with our glorious Christ, I add, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, ALL THESE THINGS ARE DONE IN PARABLES" (Mark iv. 11).

We have seen according to the testimony of the Holy Ghost given to the Church of God by the hand of Paul (1 Cor. i. 30), that as "Of Him (namely, of God the Father), are ye in Christ Jesus;" so, by God the Father we were blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ; and therefore, especially with that first and chief of all our blessings-LIFE. This brings us to the conclusion that the foundation of the whole of our ETERNAL-LIFE INTEREST in Christ, is laid in the covenant of grace—in the covenant love and purpose of God our Father. But who shall estimate the glory of this eternal-life interest, when we connect with it that which the Holy Ghost has declared to us, was contained in that one great love-act of the Father by which we are IN Christ Jesus? Thus it stands. First, the body, the Church of God, is in Christ Jesus. Is not this enough? No. For, taking the fall in Adam earthy into account, this could not stand alone; for sin, or a sinner as such, could not stand in Christ. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one." The righteous Jehovah could not dwell in the spotless Lamb of God, with a guilty church as guilty. It was necessary then, that the second part of this great love-act of God our Father, should be joined to the first; and in tracing this we shall discover a little of the unutterable blessedness and security of our life in Christ. " Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is MADE UNTO US wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

Now, as the Lord the Spirit instructs our hearts in the simplicity of living Christ, we shall discover that whatever we are in our-

selves, cannot be taken into the account. If as wise as Solomon, or as foolish as him who declares, "So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee;" it matters not; for we are not now measured by our own wisdom or prudence; but we are measured by what Christ is! The Lord the Spirit open the sweet truth to the exercised mind of some child of God, who is daily groaning over his folly. What has thy want of wisdom to do with thy life in Christ is made of God unto thee wisdom! reckoned by Christ? God Himself as thy wisdom; yea, more than reckoned so, He is so in very truth. Since He is thy Life, He is every faculty of that life. Now look at the blessedness of living Christ! Your own "Hath not God made folly—for we have no wisdom in ourselves. foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor. i. 20). What God then hath made foolish, let us not desire to esteem wisdom-your own folly is here altogether cast over board, as having nothing to do with your life in Christ!

But now let us look at the practical working of this in experience. If you have this precious life, and are living Christ, one thing is certain, that the longer you live thus, the greater daily will be your FELT-NEED of wisdom. You will feel, as you grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that to be living Christ is such a great, a glorious, a wonderful thing, that to sustain you in a walk and conversation becoming that life, you need a wisdom so infinitely above and beyond all that you can ever comprehend, that had you not the testimony of God Himself, that He in whom you are living thus as your mysterious eternal life, is Himself, in the infinite perfections of all his glorious attributes, made unto you wisdom, you must fail for ever. The very nature of the case proves it must be so in the fullest possible degree; for, if we find that the concerns connected with this shadow of a time-life of ours, are so full of difficulties, as daily to baffle the utmost stretch of our wisdom and prudence: so that it is a consolation to us above the price of rubies, that "the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord;" that in providence He is guiding us by his council; how much more must we feel hourly that the great, the glorious, the divine life which is operating as the leaven within us, must have a wisdom to guide it as infinite, immutable, and divine as its source.

How blessed, then, the consideration, that as your spiritual life is a real thing, so shall this wisdom in all its blessed operations and properties, prove to be as real. The more you know of the glory and grandeur of your life in Christ, the more will this most mighty wisdom astonish and delight your soul. We can but glance at it at

most. Like the sun to the natural eye, all the attributes of Jehovah Jesus overwhelm the gaze even of the eye of faith; but how precious is it to listen to the testimony of the dear Comforter, when the sight droops, and is dazzled by the radiant glory of the fulness of Christ, as He whispers, "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

It is in its nature infinite, therefore we can only grasp just so much as is immediately presented to the range of our finite capacities. But even thus, as the mind expands, and the heart is enlarged, enough is seen to carry the thoughts and affections far above self and sin, and all the little changing bubbles of our day-dream in time, and to cause us to go forth with the sons of God, shouting for joy!

Where then shall we take our stand for a few moments, to survey the boundless scene? That the horizon of our vision may be enlarged, we must follow the prophet Isaiah (Isa. xl.), and listen to him, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain Behold your God." Yes, it is even Jesus our glorious wisdom, that the Holy Ghost calls upon poor afflicted Zion to behold, for, that we may identify the Person of Christ here, and that every scruple of unbelief may receive its answer, He immediately adds (ver. 11), "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd;" and who is own Shepherd but our most glorious Christ?

Behold Him, then, my bewildered brother, who art daily fearing all must fail at last, because of thy folly! Behold Him! in the plenitude of that glorious wisdom, which, by the eternal love-act of God thy Father, is made all thine own. As a new-creature in Christ. He whom thou beholdest from the "high mountain." is made

of God unto thee personally THY WISDOM

"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, and being his counsellor, hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and shewed to Him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity!"

Behold thy wisdom, poor trembling and needy one! fearful as thou art, lest the next rising sun shall bring thee something as the

fruit of thy folly, that shall crush thee to the dust!

Dost thou quail under the menacings of a mighty enemy? Look to thy Friend! Behold thy Wisdom! and listen to his own precious words, which were spoken that thou mightest look away from thy self and thy folly to Him alone, "If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" He is thy Wisdom! Yea, even "He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing!"

Come again, anxious brother, full of tears that all thou hast shall be swept away from thee, come from contemplating poor Job in the ashes, and from muttering in thy vile unbelief, "One day I shall be there." Is it not a mercy worth knowing and living upon, as we "live Christ," that "godliness is profitable unto all things having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come?" Come, then, be content to become a fool in all things, to be thus wise in Him. Behold thy God, thy Wisdom. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number: He calleth them all by names! By the greatness of his might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth!" And shalt thou fail, oh, thou of little faith?

Well may we add, "Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe!" "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord; my judgment is passed over from my God?" Hast thou not known? "Yes," say you, "I have known his watchfulness, his care, his mercy, his long-suffering. I have seen too, abundant manifestations of his wisdom on my behalf. But you do not know the extent of my folly! I shall yet tire Him with the excesses of my blindness and stupidity." But where are you looking? This is not the right way to live Christ. Do we condemn the foot for being blind, if through our heedlessness it strikes itself against a stone? Where is the eye that sees all, and the wisdom that guides all? In Jacob the heel? No. It is in the Head! Is the eye ever tired of its office, in watching the steps of the blind members? No. "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps?" What tire Him with thy folly and thy needs? Spread forth thy wings, beloved, once more! Get thee to the top of the high mountain again! Behold thy Wisdom! "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, FAINTETH NOT, NEITHER IS WEARY? There is no searching of his understanding!" Here is our blessed point of rest; not what we are, but what He is made of God unto us.

Therefore, before we can fail because of our folly, our glorious Head, whose understanding is unsearchable, must Himself faint, be weary, and fail. But look, beloved, again, instead of any failure "He giveth power to the FAINT; and to them that have NO MIGHT He increaseth strength." But how does He accomplish this? The Lord help thee to wait upon Him with all thy needs, however faint. however weak; for "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Look at the marginal reading here, and see how blessed is thy condition, and how certain is the issue of every conflict in thy favour. For "They that wait upon the Lord, shall CHANGE strength." Our weakness is swallowed up in his strength our folly in his wisdom. Now, it was a knowledge of this in the sweet experience thereof, that caused Paul to "mount up with wings as an eagle; to run, and not be weary, to walk, and not faint." And thus he tells us how he grew in his knowledge, of his wisdom and strength. Driven to distraction by the thorn in his flesh, and the messenger of Satan that buffeted, taunted, sneered at, and insolently reproached him, he "waited upon the Lord," with many an ardent cry and groan for deliverance! Jesus, his wisdom and his strength, was faithful to his promise, and CHANGED strength with him; and thus it was revealed to Paul, and in like manner, beloved, shall it be revealed to thee. "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness:" and we may with blessed propriety add as an amplification of the same precious testimony, "My wisdom is made perfect in your folly." "Most gladly, therefore," says Paul, "will I RATHER GLORY in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me . . . For when I am weak, then am I strong." When I know and wait upon the Lord, deploring my folly, then am I wisdom itself in my glorious Head.

Then, cheer up, my oppressed brother! Behold another blessed step in the knowledge of our new life, and sing, "To me to live is

Christ."

He is our Wisdom, overflowing above all possible conceptions of need. What are the schemes of Satan, the entanglements of the world, or the frailties of the flesh?

Oh, I fear them, I tremble; for I feel I have no power to stand

a moment against them.

Bless the Lord for his precious teaching. He bringeth low, that He may lift us up. He shows us our ignorance, that He may open to us the eternal security we have in Christ; and to bring the trembling hearts of his children to an establishment in the truth, as expressed by Paul (Phil. iii. 3), "We are the true circumcision,

which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have NO confidence in the flesh."

Thus instructed, it becomes the daily delight of the Lord's children, to go right away out of self, and all that distresses in self. and mounting far above all fleshly conceptions of things, to forget themselves in the fulness and glory of their new-creature-ship in Thus living they find, the greater the exigency, the Christ Jesus. more pressing the need of wisdom, the fuller is the chorus of exultation and praise, that Christ Himself personally is made of God unto us Wisdom. Let the enemy come in like a flood-let the old serpent try to drown thy voice with his malicious "Impossibles!" we can fling back his contemptible lie, as we point to the glorious testimony as it stands, not only recorded in the word, but sealed by the living power and witnessing of the Spirit in our hearts, that our wisdom stands in the FULNESS OF CHRIST, "who is the image of the invisible God For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body the Church, who is the beginning, the First-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."

Now, as this is realized in the trembling heart of little-faith, it will cause him to go forth triumphing in his own emptiness, that Christ may be all in all. And he will sing—

"This God is the God we adore,
Our faithful unchangable Friend;
Whose love is as large as his power,
And neither knows measure nor end.
'Tis JESUS, the first, and the last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."

His peace be with you all. Amen.

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

Do I LIVE CHRIST?

(No. 9.)

" For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 2.

"THE way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. xxxv. 8). Why? Because as they are brought out of nature's death to Live Christ, they live in a life the affairs of which for time and for eternity must be ordered in all things and sure. In Christ, their wisdom is infinite, but connected with, and forming part of this wisdom, is infinite knowledge, then add to these, to make all eternally secure, the blessed fact that this glorious Christ has Almighty power to accomplish all his purposes; and both power and wisdom are under the influence of his infinite love, which knows no change towards his body the Church.

Thus "rooted and built up in Him," we come now to take another step in contemplating the glorious provision which our covenant God and Father has laid up for his eternally-beloved ones in the Person of Christ. This same MIGHTY ONE, "The Creator of the ends of the earth," is not only made unto us Wisdom, but

also Righteousness.

Well may Paul shout as he beholds the royal bounty of our God in the provision he has laid up for his princely family, "But my God shall supply ALL YOUR NEEDS, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus!" Who can measure the infinite blessedness contained in this triumphant acclamation of the Apostle's? Hast thou a living need, my anxious brother, either for body or soul, for time or eternity, that exceeds in its requirement the infinite fulness of God's riches in glory by [or more strictly IN] Christ Jesus? Truly such testimonies are sufficient to put to the blush, even the most incorrigable unbelief! since the more pressing or the greater the feeling of need, the more unquestionable the evidence of LIVING INTEREST in the blessing!

"Who of God is made unto us wisdom and RIGHTEOUSNESS." Here again this is no figure of speech, but a real and eternally glorious fact. And the blessedness stands in our living union to Jesus our Head. It is in the fulness of this most precious truth, as the Spirit opens the understanding to comprehend it, that we discover the unchanging nature of our blessedness as new-creatures in

Christ.

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 18.

The gift of such wisdom as we have in Christ without righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—supposing such a thing possible—would have placed us in a condition far worse than Satan himself. But our God and Father in providing a help-meet for "the Son of his love," would have her perfect; so perfect, that while Christ the Head of the body the Church, shall be the eternal glory of heaven, this Bride of his, this Companion, made perfect in Himself, for his own pleasure and delight, shall be the eternal wonder of heaven. "A woman clothed with the Sun!" and also the eternal glory of Christ Himself; "For the woman is the glory of the man."

Herein is manifested the blessedness of "living Christ." But the knowledge of it comes through such a line of inward teaching by the Spirit of God, that at first the child of God concludes that all he discovers is against him, rather than for his eternal good. We refer, now, not to that which can be comprehended of the nature of outward sin by the natural mind, but to that solemn inward feeling of soul-pollution, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the heart, although confined to thoughts which are neither uttered in words, or find their birth in outward actions, which produce a burden so crushing, as if not removed by the power of the precious blood of Christ, would sink the living sufferer into black despair.

Now, behold, dear little faith, what it is that causes thee to sigh being burdened day by day!

"Oh," say you, "it is my dreadful sin."

· But how came you by the knowledge of the bitterness of your sin? You knew it not in its exceeding sinfulness, until the word of life said in your soul, "Light be!" But there can be no light, or more properly, nothing seen in the light, where there is no life! Now, how stands the case really—is it thy sins that cause thee to groan? Nay. But rather the LIFE to feel the burden, and the light of life to see the pollution, or exceeding sinfulness of sin. This is plain if you reflect, that the masses of mankind are sinners like yourself; but because they are sinners, it does not follow that their sins are a burden to them. No. But rather the facts of the case prove that sin-in one shape or other, is the delight of every unregenerate man. It is spiritual life in thee, that makes all the difference. But, moreover, we have seen this very life by which these discoveries become realities, and not mere notions in us, is the life by which as new-creatures we "live Christ." What then follows as a conclusion from all this—the Lord help thee to realize it, dear brother—that, miserable as we may be in ourselves at the first

lighting-up of the candle of the Lord within, yet the issues shall be most blessed; for the more we discover of our own utter ruin in ourselves by reason of the incurable sinfulness of our natures, the more shall we be brought to nothing in our own esteem, and thereby be prepared for the reception of that soul-comforting, heart-enlarging, and mind-elevating revelation, which the Lord the Spirit waits to make to every regenerated child of God, as the ultimate end of all his teachings during the "bringing down of the heart." "It is in his light we see light," but it is the property of his light first to make manifest the darkness. As soon, however, as the darkness is made fully manifest, Christ our Light and our Life appears. The Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and reveals them in our hearts; we, then, wake up to the blessed discovery, that "Christ is made of God unto us righteousness;" and thus the "true light" now begins to shine in our hearts, to give us the LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The light cannot be separated from the life, and the life cannot be separated from the Person of Christ. But neither can the wisdom or the righteousness, therefore, wherever the true feeling of need is manifested, there must be light to discover it, and life to feel it; then it follows, that Christ being that life, wherever the life is, there is Christ; and there also by the covenant act of God our

Father, is infinite wisdom, and spotless righteousness.

But what righteousness? Not a creature-righteousness! would be subject to failure, as Adam's was. But to make all eternally sure, thus stands the case, as reported to faith by the blessed Comforter in the holy word. "All we [the Church], like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him [caused to meet upon Christ], the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6). How glorious are the living truths of God, when brought home with power to a needy sinner's soul! Living faith delights to clasp the precious revelation of Jesus, and press it as a reviving cordial to the fainting spirit of the new-man. Our sins were caused to meet upon Christ; and thus being transferred from the Church to her glorious Head, as they could not be in two places at one and the same time, the (hurch, the body of Christ, stood free from sin; and not only free so as to be justified from all things, as though she had never sinned at all; not only cleansed from all defilement by the precious blood of Christ, but also clothed with a robe so pure, that the searching eye of Jehovah can never detect a spot therein. And thus stands the unalterable testimony, as an answer to the accusations of Satan, and an ever-effective antidote to the poison of unbelief. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto-Himself." Observe how! "Not imputing their trespasses unto them." But to whom then did God impute them? Behold, poor broken-hearted child of God, thy eternal freedom from the consequences of all that can happen in connection with thy deceitful heart and corrupt nature through all time! "For He (God), hath made Him (Christ), to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21); and thus—let cavillers say what they may—Christ is made of God unto us righteousness.

We must not forget here, that this glorious circumstance on behalf of the Church, was not a time-transaction, but was done in covenant before time began. According to the infinite foreknowledge of God, every item of sin which it was known, would be or could be committed by the members of the body of Christ, throughout all time, were brought together into one mighty account, and presented to Christ in covenant, who became Surety or Bondsman for the payment of the whole debt, in his own sacred Person on Calvary, and by virtue of his covenant bond given on behalf of his Bride, He is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. This was the only account God ever kept, or ever will keep, of the sins of the Church. Therefore, it is said He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob: He always beheld it on the Head of the Surety. sufferings and death of Christ were the fulfilment of his covenant engagements on behalf of the Church; and He now ever lives to present his claims, on behalf of his Church, of pardon and justification, through his own precious blood. What, then, is our privilege, my poor afflicted, tempest-tossed brother? Is it to sit down in melancholy and unbelief, and count over the plague spots on our garments? No. But rather to wonder and adore the infinite love, and compassion of our God towards us, as He beheld us in our helplessness in self, and laid help upon one who has proved Himself mighty to save. So that instead of reckoning up our black catalogues, our only source of comfort is to come to this conclusion, that had I or you, dear brother, been a million times deeper in debt than we are, the whole score was annihilated when Jesus made an end of sin (Dan. ix. 24), and cried, "It is finished"—bowed his sacred head, and gave up the ghost. We must add, that it is walking after the flesh, and not by faith in the Son of God after the teaching of the Spirit, to be seeking comfort from any other source, because it is in Jesus only we find our righteousness; and standing in that robe, it is an act of infidelity to be attempting to make ourselves more acceptable to God, than the righteousness of Christ makes us. For "there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

You will probably shrink from joining us in our song of triumphant praise, dear little faith, because knowing as you do, if you are spiritually alive, the deceitfulness of your heart, a secret something whispers, "I fear to lay hold firmly of these royal testimonies, lest it should produce in the least degree, indifference or trifling with horrid sin." This is a trap of Satan's, in which, as a white devil, as Luther calls him, he entangles the feet of those who are earnestly yearning after a sweet knowledge of that liberty wherewith Christ has made his children free. There is, however, not the slightest danger of this, where the life of God is in the soul of a man.

Monsters dead in trespasses and sins, who call themselves Calvinists, and talk loudly about doctrines, but love sin, live in sin, and

laugh at sin, there may be—

"The wretch that calls himself elect, And yet can sin endure; That he's not chosen may suspect, That he's not called be sure!"

But where Christ our Life is formed in the heart, the Hope of glory, not an hour passes, but the fear of the Lord will prompt such an one, feelingly to cry, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe!" Yes, even in the midst of a chorus of praise, "Unto Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;" will this cry continually go forth in earnest pleadings for protection against the power of sin in the flesh. And we now come to look at the source of this godly fear, which we shall find only exists in those who are "LIVING CHRIST."

Not only is Christ Jesus made unto us wisdom infinite, righteousness infinitely perfect, but also sanctification, or holiness itself, in the fulness and infinite perfection thereof.

Now, what God has joined together, let no man put asunder; it is utterly impossible for any man to possess one link in this golden chain of blessedness without possessing all. If we live Christ, and Christ is living in us, in Him our Life, we possess these inseparable qualities or properties as belonging thereto, namely, Divine wisdom, Divine righteousness, and Divine holiness, the possession of which proves that we are eternally REDEEMED.

And now, beloved little faith, I am coming to very close quarters with you. Christ is made of God unto us holiness. If, then, we have Christ, and are alive from our nature's death in Adam the

first, by regeneration in Him; there is not a moment now, but this most glorious property of our life, PERFECT HOLINESS, is

operating within!

Paul tells us (Gal. ii. 20), how he lived Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; YET NOT I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME." But Christ is made of God unto us holiness; therefore, perfect holiness is ever living in me! How great does the mystery appear to an exercised child of God, who has not been instructed into the reality and distinct difference both in nature and individual being, which exists between that life which we derive from Adam-earthy, which is crucified with Christ, and that life in which we live, and which lives in us, by which we live Christ, and by which Christ lives in us. We shall never arrive, however, at right conclusions about ourselves, or the things of God, until we understand something of the distinction which ever must exist between the old and the new natures in a child of God.

There is a thing with which we are conversant, which to my mind sets forth the state of the case more simply than any other, and especially in the particular now before us, namely, the perfect holiness which is operating and producing its effects, every moment, in the regenerated child of God—I refer to a Balloon. It may be thought at first an odd figure to use, to set forth a child of God; however, it will not appear so odd as we examine it a little.

It is clear that the balloon consists of two perfectly distinct parts. First, the machine itself. Secondly, the power by which it is made to ascend. And that these two parts have nothing in common the one with the other. Look at the machine! there it lies, a dead motionless thing, beautiful in its contrivance truly, but having no more power in itself to lift itself up, than a mountain has power to roll itself into the sea. But observe, it is tied and staked down to the earth by many a strong cord. At present we see not the need of this; for it is evident its own GRAVITY AS A LAW WITHIN ITSELF, will keep it firmly cleaving to the dust. Here is a man dead in sin; THE LAW OF SIN in his members, without any external ties, is enough to keep him always chained to the earth. The law of sin ever gravitates downwards—and well the living child of God knows it.

But observe now, how great a change takes place! Another power begins to act within it. The thing which before lay unmoved, and presenting a curious mass of disorder, now begins to expand, and roll over in restless heavings and contortions, like one in distress. Is it not just like the first beginnings of the entrance of divine life into the soul of a man? It begins by lifting him up out

of the place where he lay; but the law of sin in his members is too strong for him, he surges and rolls about, finding neither power to ascend, nor power to lie still! But he does not stop here—He grows in grace. The ascending power increases within him. Mark, the gravity of the machine—the Law of sin remains the same; the old material is unchanged. But look at it now! expanded to its full growth—panting to be gone like Paul; "pressing towards the mark!" ever tending upward, straining every cord; "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

Is there any imperfection in the ascending power? No. It is held down for a season, until all is ready; then the cords which hold us down to earth, shall be cut for ever; death shall dissolve our ties to earth; this mortal shall put on immortality, the law of sin shall be destroyed, "and we shall be changed; for this corruptible, must put on incorruption." But the new life will still remain the same, perfectly holy. It is its holiness that gives it its ascending power. As sin tends downwards, so holiness tends upwards. And thus Paul expresses it, when looking at the LAW OF SIN in his members which gravitates towards the earth, he cries out, "Oh, wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" But the next moment looking at the ascending power in which as a new-creature, he was living Christ, he changes his lamentation into praise, as though he would exclaim, "But what do I complain about? How is it I feel this burden How is it I groan being burdened? How is it'I of death? cannot be happy, until these cords of earth are cut? It is, because of this new expanding and ascending power, which carries up my heart and desires away from sin, death, the world, and timethings! It is, because since this new power has been put within me, I have a new mind—"For, we have the mind of Christ" which abhors that which is evil, and cleaves to, and struggles after, that which is good! It is then, because Christ is made of God unto me wisdom, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption.

What then! shall I lament that I feel as I do? Oh, no! But rather rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. For I now discover, that all that afflicts my soul from day to day, and causes me so much sorrow, because I cannot do the thing that is good, arises from this new power, that has changed me from a dead sinner into a living seeker of holiness and peace. And I now begin to discover, that in my new mind I am holy and ever serving God! This it is which makes me a new creature; and since my flesh with its affections and lusts is crucified with Christ, and yet I live, it is

no more I, but Christ liveth in me. Therefore, I will go on henceforth, thus reckoning according to my new life, I turn away for ever from contemplating myself under the power and reign of the law of sin in my members, however vigorously it may strive for the mastery; for sin shall not have the dominion; nor can it possibly have, over this ever-upward tending power of Divine life. Therefore, I will ever shout, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord." So then, with the mind—the new life—the holy ascending power—I MYSELF—as a new creature, serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.

Yes, praises to his glorious name! I am in Christ, and Christ is in me! The momentous question is answered. And thus it stands, dear little faith, in its first sweet openings in experience.

"These feeble desires, these wishes so weak;
"Tis Jesus inspires, and bids you still seek!
His Spirit will cherish, the life He first gave:
You never shall perish, while Jesus can save."

We have now brought to a close this part of our subject as to the nature and operations of true spiritual life. What mere professors of religion may say or think about it, is a matter that does not concern us for a moment. But it does most deeply concern us, that the dear members of the same body, who are beginning to "LIVE CHRIST," but are at a loss to understand the movements of that life which by its power has disturbed them in their death in sin, and brought them to seek after a peace to which the world are strangers, should have their thoughts directed into a right channel, that they may not be looking to gather grapes from the thorn-bush of the flesh. But that they may be led out of self and all its emptiness. up to Christ alone as the sole Fountain of all blessedness, knowing. as we do, that the more empty we feel ourselves to be, the more shall we rejoice in the mercy, as it is discovered to faith, that it hath pleased the Father, that in Christ should ALL FULNESS DWELL! So that, dwelling in Christ, we dwell in all his fulness! a knowledge of which will cause us to triumph above all things in the mercy that "To me to live is Christ!" for it is inestimable gain now.

> If such the sweetness of the streams, What must the fountain be?

"To die is gain!"

Thou Holy Comforter! whose delight it is to take of the things of Christ, and to reveal Him in the living, longing hearts of his desiring members! add thy sweet power and unction with these feeble breathings for Jesus' sake. Amen.

IMMANUEL'S PORTRAIT OF HIS BRIDE.

(No. 1.)

Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."—Solomon's Song iv. 7.

THE contemplation of the love of Christ in all its glories, in its infinite breadth, length, depth, and height, tends to swallow up every other subject; and as it is dwelt upon, it expands the heart, enobles the soul, and causes the man who has the Spirit's witness within him testifying that he is a living possessor of that love, to live daily in the aspirations of his renewed mind, and in the ascensions of his longing heart, above the world, Satan, sin, death, time, and all its vanities; and even now, in resurrection-blessedness, above himself after the flesh, in personal and precious fellowship with the Holy Three, who bear record in heaven. Yes, and all this while his troubled, tempest-tossed soul, is passing through deep waters; or while he is threatened, perhaps moment by moment, with inundation,

by the enemy coming in like a flood.

It may, and doubtless will be, questioned by some, whether such a state of experience is to be found among the Lord's children. little calm examination of the point, will show, however, that such a blessed mode of "living Christ," not only may be, but is, attained by many, who are brought by the ministry of the Spirit to live above frames and feelings, and who are drawing their inferences from what by personal revelation in the Spirit, they have discovered themselves to be as new-creatures in Christ; and who, therefore, are through rich mercy delivered from that false mode of reckoning, their spiritual blessedness, by the ever-varying lights and shades, sunshine and warmth in comfort and joy, succeeded by winter frosts, stony heartedness, turmoil, and barrenness, which fill up every page of their history, and make this life a burden to them. To reckon by our changes in feeling as though our life, which is hid with Christ in God, was subject to these changes, is to oppose our folly to the wisdom of God, and to act in direct contradiction of the rule laid down by the Holy Ghost, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin [yes, while you feel daily the law of sin working in your members], but alive unto God IN Jesus Christ our Lord.

[THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 19.

Dost thou sigh, my beloved exercised brother? I hear thee say, "Ah! it is all easy enough for dead professors to take it for granted that all is well; but I cannot be content unless I have the assurance of my interest in Christ burnt into my very soul." True, and a glorious mercy it is, my brother, that thou art not one of that class, who can be content with a name that they live while they are dead! But let us look the matter over in its simplicity.

You will observe, we have used the term "fellowship," and not "communion." These words, although often used to express the same thing, yet as they are given to us in God's word, have two distinct

meanings, which we do well to bear in mind at all times.

Communion, as spoken of by the Lord to Moses (Exod. xxv. 22), is the sense we too often attach to the word fellowship; but we shall see, there may be fellowship where there is no immediate communion; and that the closing up of sweet communion does not alter, in the least degree, our fellowship. "And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat." The word here literally means to speak, to tell, to promise, to converse, to teach. and to do all this eloquently, with kindness, and even with joy to sing with in communion. Now we know that the yearning desire of every living child of God, is after continual communion thus: for, having tasted the sweetness of such moments, when the rock has dropped honey, and the good old covenant wine of the kingdom has been freely poured into the love-cup, desire is ever hovering about the mercy-seat, longing after a repetition in precious manifestation, of these seasons of communion.

Experience, however, teaches us, that we have no controul over communion; it is all bestowed as a sovereign blessing, just when and to that extent which our infinite Wisdom sees to be for our good and his own glory. But here is our misery; unbelief in us, actuated by the malicious accuser of the brethren, gathers from the long continued withholding of the mercy, either that the Lord is angry, or that all we have experienced in times past has been delusion, and that we have no part or lot in the matter; so that the very kindness of the Lord in giving us his presence by manifest communion, is turned by the arch enemy into a weapon with which he would slay our hope. Now, that the purpose of Satan may be foiled herein, we pray the Holy Comforter to open to us "the simplicity" that is in Christ.

Communion, then, is fluctuating; and therefore, cannot be that

upon which full-assurance is founded, but fellowship knows no change; fellowship expresses our abiding interest in all that belongs to us as new-creatures in Christ Jesus, and stands at all times unchangeably the same, by virtue of our union to our most glorious Head. It is PARTNERSHIP. The possession or title to property is one thing, the enjoyment of that property altogether another. is by faith we apprehend the reality of our fellowship with God our Father, in all those immortal blessings which He has treasured up for his chosen ones in Christ, which leads us up to hope for things we see not; but it is by the sweet testimonies of the Holy Comforter, when in precious manifestation He takes of the things of Christ, and glorifies Christ, by showing Him unto us (John xvi. 14), that we enter feelingly into endeared commuion. These are lovevisits, and last but a little season, and are usually given to us like Elijah's feast under the juniper-tree (1 Kings xix. 4), at the commencement of a long and dreary journey in the wilderness, which generally terminates in tempests, and fires, and earthquakes, before we again wrap our face in the holy mantle of his love, and righteousness, and in heart-dissolving communion, again listen to the renewed whispers of his "still small voice."

Fellowship is thus set forth by the beloved Apostle John, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). How glorious is this truth in the personal knowledge thereof, and in its abiding blessedness! Christ is the Father's well-beloved Son—the Son of his love. Christ is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether levely One to the Church. Here, then, stands the partnership, which nothing in time or eternity can alter. Christ is the Father's only-begotten Son; and He so loved his people, that He freely gave Christ to them; and by this precious donation we have eternal fellowship or partnership with the Father in the Person of Christ. But again, we have fellowship with Christ, as He Himself testifies after his resurrection, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to MY God and YOUR God." Here we have eternal untouchable fellowship or partnership with Christ: for being his children, whatever may happen in after life, nothing can make us otherwise than children of the same Father. Moreover, Christ and the Father have had, and ever must retain, eternal fellowship or partnership in the Church, as it is written, "All things that the Father hath, are mine" (John xvi. 15); and again, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they ARE thine. And all mine ARE thine, and thine ARE mine; and I am glorified in them" (John xvii. 9, 10). Here stands the grand foundation of our blessedness; not in the amount of our enjoyment; nor in the extent of our knowledge of the grainus truth; nor even in the apprehension of it by faith; but, in the infinitely grand and glorious truth itself. We may go on for days, weeks, months, or even years, without any felt-enjoyment of communion; but this does not touch our fellowship; we are still the property of Christ, and also of the Father in Him; "Ye are not your own, ve are bought with a price." "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no power or circumstance is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." And Christ is still our own Husband, Head, Friend, Brother, and Life; and He has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Thus, as we stand in oneness of life and blessedness in and with Him, his Father is our own Father; and thus is summed up the whole glorious fellowship in which we shall be eternally satisfied, when we awake up in his likeness, "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ve are Christ's, and Christ is God's." What can the child of God desire more? Yea, what can he have more? All things! What a partnership! Can we wonder that Satan should be filled with envy and malice against a poor broken-hearted, worthless sinner, when he beholds him thus taken up into fellowship with the Holy Three, who bear record—to the eternal unchangeable nature of this partnership—in heaven? How should it fill the soul of a child of God with delight, thus to contemplate the love of Christ, whose glory it is to keep in eternal security—not only the property vested in Himself on behalf of his Church, but also every little babe in the Holy family, whose names are written in heaven!

What, sigh again, my brother? Your sigh is the reply to our question: What can the child of God desire more? You desire more present enjoyment of the foretastes of that fulness of joy which is at his right hand? But the Lord says, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." He hath not promised us two heavens; but He hath said, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." What days? Days of sorrow, days of conflict, days of crushing labour and darkness, days of temptation, days of hardness and rebellion; nevertheless, whatever may "weaken thy strength in the way," although it may terrify at the first onset, and seem as though it must devour or overcome thee, yet it shall prove to thee like Samson's lion, "Out of the eater shall come forth meat, and out of the strong shall come forth sweetness." "It is through much tribula-

tion we must enter the kingdom;" and not only so, but it is through the dark valley of Achor, or trouble, we must pass to meet with our adorable Ishi, and enter into precious communion with Him, when, as our Door of hope, He opens to us his tender heart, and confirms us in the knowledge of his love.

But what my exercised brother stands in need of, is a something he can hold fast in the dark as well as in the light; which shall prove to him, although he has no present communion, yet even then, although he can see nothing, that "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

"Ah! say you, that is what I want. If the Lord would give me that, I should be content to live even in a continual furnace!"

But what if the Lord has already given it to you? and if it shall appear, that at this moment, the very words which have just burst from your heart, spring from that ABIDING GIFT which, if rightly estimated, ALWAYS, into whatever circumstances you may be cast, proves that you stand in eternal fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ?

You sigh again? You cannot believe it? Nevertheless, if you have this gift, black and uncomely as you may appear in yourself, it, the GIFT, is ever witnessing in your soul, and whispering in your heart—but you are "dull of hearing" (Heb. v. 11)—"Thou art ALL fair, MY love; there is no spot in thee." You cannot have this gift without possessing all that stands in eternal, unalterable connection therewith! How wonderful! how blessed the thought! That I a base sinner—a worm—still full of corrupt tendencies, with a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked! Yet, being invested with this gift, "TRULY MY fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ!" What in? An angel's portion? That would be astonishing—yea, infinitely higher than angels! As much so, as a wife's portion in fellowship is above a servant's! As much so, as a queen's fellowship with her royal husband is above a subject's! Yes, if I have this simple gift, all the unsearchable riches of Christ are mine-eternally mine!

My brother, is thy heart contracted—grovelling among, and bent upon, the gilded specks that float upon the surface of the bubble time as it rises and expands in the eternal sunshine? The bubble shall soon burst, and be no more! But where, then, shall be my fellowship? In Him! eternally the same! Let me add, thou wilt find no abiding and strong consolation, until this fellowship holds the chief place in thine affections. Then, the meaning of Paul's testimony will be developed. "For though we walk in the flesh, we

do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down—all our bless-edness in experience comes in this way—to the pulling down of strongholds); casting down imaginations [or, as in the margin, which reads far more preciously REASONINGS], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity EVERY THOUGHT to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 3—5).

But what is this gift, which witnesseth, at all times, that we live in fellowship with God and are "all fair?" It is LIFE! "The gift of God is eternal life, IN [not through, but in] Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). Wherever this life is, the love of Christ has a sweet attracting influence upon it; and that living soul will find no rest, until by the ministry of the Spirit it is brought up to a knowledge of fellowship, in union with, and in growing admiration of, the Person of Christ.

I have already, in previous lectures, spoken of this life under many figures. I add one more; if by any means, under the Holy Comforter's sealing, my beloved wavering brother may be brought

to apprehend the abiding blessedness of "living Christ."

There is an unspeakably blessed attractive power in the Person and love of Christ; but this power is only manifested in its actings on the new heart of a regenerated child of God, through the channel of life. There can be no love, therefore, no desire after knowledge of, and communion with a person, where there is no life.

Every child of God is like a magnetic needle; spiritual life, like the magnetic property which is communicated to the needle. Before the needle is magnetised, it may be most delicately poised; but it is dead, and in whatever direction its points are placed, there it will remain at dead rest. How changed the condition of the thing the moment the living magnetic property is communicated to it! Force may hold it in a position which is contrary to its new bent, but the instant it is set free, it eagerly seeks that one point, in which it can now alone find living rest. Just so is it with a living, heaven-born child of God: life is the acting property, love is the attracting power, and the Person and glory of Christ, the point in which alone the loving, living one can find rest.

Now, we ask thee, dear brother, dost thou know anything of the restless effect of this new power acting within thee? that will not, that cannot, let thee settle down at peace, and in comfort with anything, or in anything, short of a personal knowledge, in sweet communion, in ever-blessed fellowship, in, and with God the Father in Christ? It is eternal life, acted upon by everlasting love, which is

drawing thee up out of sin, self, and the world; according to the divine testimony of our most glorious Christ: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John vi. 44). Now, look at the blessed tendency and effect of this all-constraining power. Thou shalt here see the cause of all that long train of inconsistencies which continually present themselves in thyself and in others; and which produce so much perplexity in thy often bewildered mind.

While searching after the sole point of rest, rude hands and rough winds may cause a long continuance of trembling restlessness, and the doubtful needle may seem as though it would never settle down into peaceful repose. But, let a perfect calm come; it is riveted, enchained, all movement has ceased! Nor would it ever change its position, did all things around it remain unchanged. But where is it fixed? It is held by an invisible power in that ever-flowing current of attraction, which was the same when all was in commotion, and which will remain the same when all becomes commotion again. So delicately is it poised that the least vibration produces an instant trembling; but this very fact only proves with what truth it is adjusted, and that the slightest interruption, that would divert it from its rest, makes it cling with the more evident tenacity to its pole.

It is exactly thus in the experience of every living child of God, they may be long tossed about by winds of doctrine before they are brought up to point to "Jesus only." Nevertheless, the life of God in their souls is ever tending towards Christ, as its centre. In the midst of its tossings, the troubled soul feels as though it could never find rest; still, however greatly agitated, and tossed, and filled with terror, the soul may be, love is acting in, and upon it, and love in both subject and object, will never be at rest until a full disclosure is made on both sides: then, faith working by love, receives the pledge and the promise; and the hitherto trembling sinner finds joy and peace in believing. Mr. Hart sweetly sings,

"When Jesus with his mighty love
Visits my troubled breast;
My fears subside, my doubts remove,
And I'm completely bless'd.
Nothing but Jesus I esteem,
My heart is then sincere;

And everything that's dear to Him,
To me is also dear."

And while He speaks all things into peace, and there is a great calm, we continue with heart and mind swallowed up in sweet com-

munion. But, the instant He suffers the storm to rise again, and permits the enemy to come in like a flood, all our quiet and stability seems to make a ship-wreck; and the trembling needle seems to be the most unstable thing in the world. But why? It is its truthfulness that makes all APPEAR so incessantly wavering. It is still enchained by the power of love, and although it may change positions ten thousand times an hour, it is only so in appearance! for, observe, it is the things which surround it, are ever on the change, while itself—that is, the life of God in the soul, under the influence of divine love—is ever flowing out, and up, towards its glorious unchanging, all constraining source, namely, the Person and fulness of Jesus Christ.

Now, as this is apprehended by the Lord's children, they will be led to see, that the tendency and effect of this life, which exposes all their inconsistencies and changes, is that by which, after all, they must keep their reckoning. Exercises from misconceptions of the true nature of the case, will constantly arise, because outward things are ever shifting and changing, and these moving things, attract the attention, and draw the eye and mind away from Christ our life, where alone is stability and unchanging blessedness. However, our mercy in the midst of all stands here. Our glorious Husband is never diverted from the object of his delight, but ever gazing upon his Church, as she stands in his own comeliness, he rejoices to tell her, "Thou art all fair my love; there is no spot in thee."

The child of God must be brought by the Spirit's teaching, into a knowledge of abiding fellowship, in oneness of life in Christ, before he can enter fully into the blessedness of thus living at all times, "all fair." But, of this we shall look for a further opening in our next.

His peace be with you all. Amen.

IMMANUEL'S PORTRAIT OF HIS BRIDE.

(No. 2.)

"Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."—Solomon's Song iv. 7.

WE have the whole matter of the unalterable blessedness and unchangeable beauty of the church, as she stands in eternal fellowship with God in the Person of Christ, most sweetly set forth in this Song of Songs; which is our most glorious Solomon's; our wisdom; our righteousness; our holiness; our redemption. The Song of our ever-living Jedediah—the beloved of the Lord, touching his bride.

Before, however, the child of God is brought sweetly to settle down at rest in "Jesus only," and to live in the daily blessed apprehension of his divine and unalterable fellowship with the Father. in the Person of Christ; and consequently, in the knowledge of the glorious fulness of the testimony before us, "Thou art all fair;" two things must be devoloped in his experience, by the personal teaching and ministry of the Holy Spirit. I say personal, because it is more than a theoretical perception of the truth in the mind; it is an inwrought persuasion in the soul, like that which Paul had when he exclaimed, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Oh, blessed persuasion! Oh, divine foretaste of that rest which remaineth! How unutterably glorious is it to live under the sweet anointings of the Spirit, producing in the renewed heart, broken and crushed though it be by a thousand conflicts, even a small measure of this holy persuasion!

The two necessary attainments are these; first an acquaintance, thorough and deep, with the Persons concerned, namely, Christ, who is the Speaker, and the church, to whom, and of whom He speaks; and secondly, the blessed nature of the fact spoken of: the divine beauty and spotless purity in which every child of God stands, as in new-creatureship, he "lives Christ."

[THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 20.

"Acquaint now thyself with Him," says Eliphaz to Job, " and be at peace." Whatever men may teach to the contrary, no solid peace will be found until we know Christ; that is, if we are alive from the dead spiritually. Yet there is no knowledge which mere professors put from them with so much determination, as a true and scriptural knowledge of Jesus Christ—the Christ of God, and the reason is obvious: for if the Christ of God as He stands forth, from all eternity, the Head of his body, the church; the eternal Rock of ages on which his church is being built in time, according to the covenant design of its eternal Architect, be acknowledged as Paul sets Him forth, as the gift of the Father to the church, and to the church alone, whose names have been from everlasting written in heaven, it so lays the axe at the root of their systems of " offers" and " invitations," sown broad-cast up and down the length and breadth of Christendom, that all their flesh-pleasing schemes must come down with an overwhelming crash. These talk about a Christ it is true. but it is such a Christ as will not offend the carnal mind of an unregenerate man; it is such a Christ as does not develope that which the Holy Ghost by Paul has laid down as a rule which nothing can alter, namely, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7). The whole mind of God, including the covenant of grace in particular, is that law to which the carnal mind is, and will be, at eternal enmity. And among no class of men is this enmity so clearly seen, and so keenly felt, as among the masses of the so called evangelical of our day, who are building their systems, and the houses of their profession on the deceitful sands of universal offers of grace.

How gross is the absurdity to talk of offering life! all admit that a man must be born from above before he can be a spiritual man, but God has only one spiritual life to bestow, and that is eternal life. "The gift of God is eternal life;" can eternal life die? No. The man who has it is "passed from death unto or into life," eternal life! Therefore our glorious Christ says, "Amen, amen, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." But no man CAN HEAR OF BELIEVE SPIRITUALLY until he is a spiritual man; and he cannot be a spiritual man until he is born of the Spirit. The Spirit is God! and his first gift to an elect sinner is eternal life: and Christ personally is that life. Now who but a man mad with enmity against the simple truth as it stands in Jesus, will affirm that the Spirit, Jeho-

vah, the Omnipotent! when he comes upon a man as he came upon Paul on his way to Damascus merely offers him spiritual life? Are not those who are newly born from above called "New born babes" (1 Pet. ii. 2)? Does not John tell us that in God's family there are "little children" (1 John ii. 12)? Does not Paul also tell the Hebrews that " Every one who useth milk is unskilfulin the word of righteousness: for he is a babe," (Heb. v. 13)? But to be babes in God's family they must be born from above—born of the Spirit: and therefore spiritually alive; which is to be eternally alive, since the gift of God is eternal life. Has the babe naturally an option in the matter as to whether it will accept life or no? Is life OFFERED to the babe? But what is this flitting moment of a thing called life, naturally, when compared to the eternal blessedness of that immortal life which converts a dead sinner into a living child of God? and shall it be said, that while the mortal life in its first flowings is irresistible, this boundless, eternal, only blessed life, inwrought in the soul by the Omnipotent Spirit, by which a dead sinner is made a living spiritual saint in Christ Jesus, may be, and is, resisted by death in that sinner? It is written, "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7). Was it possible for the dead matter of which Adam was formed to resist the power of the great Creator? It is written, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii. 10). Shall it be said that the great Creator in this new and eternally enduring creation, which shall be the glory of eternity itself, long after the pendulum of time shall cease to move, is less potent? Has the Holy Ghost made a mistake in calling it a creation? which must be the case if God is dependent on the will of the creature to enable Him to work, or to receive that life which contains in it the essence of all that is eternally blessed and glorious. What if this statement lays the axe at the root of men's systems of "offered grace," "offered salvation," " OFFERED LIFE!" are we to gloss over the truth. or keep it back, lest it give offence? To all who reject the Christ of God, and hold the traditions or systems of men, we must say as "Peter and John answered and said unto the Jews, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ve" Acts iv. 19). If God does not offer life, but if He bestows it as a free grace gift upon whom HE WILL, and that life is Christ formed in his people's hearts, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27), "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by

faith" (Eph. iii. 17)—what is our first and chief concern? Is it not to seek diligently to know if we ourselves have received this great and glorious gift? "To give diligence to make our calling sure" that is, to ascertain beyond a doubt that we are truly called out of darkness into God's marvellous light; out of nature's death into spiritual life in Christ. Of one thing we are quite sure, namely, that when God has given this life, this earnest course will follow: nor can such be content until they know Him in whom they have believed; to such, men's systems will be as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." Men may offer, and press their offers; but a living child of God who is as a new-born babe, desiring the sincere milk of the word, needs something more than offers, the little helpless thing can neither walk, wash, feed, cloth, or help itself; all it can do is to desire, and cry, and moan after that, which, if only offered, it could never obtain, it must be carried by another, freely, it must be washed by another, fed by another, clothed by another, protected and instructed by another, and this is the only way it can grow and learn, and thus Paul expresses it, "But ye have not so learned Christ [that is, by men's fleshly, dark, blind systems]; if so be that we have heard Him, and have been taught BY HIM, AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS: that ye put off, concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to his deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the NEW MAN, which after God is CREATED [not offered] in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 20). In which TRUE HOLINESS and RIGHTEOUSNESS we stand, Christ being all and in all; and it is only as we thus stand in Him that the testimony comes forth, "Thou art all fair my love, these is no spot in thee."

This brings us up to the question as to the parties concerned in this wonderful declaration. It is eternal truth that utters it, therefore it must be true. But what says the person of whom it is spoken? If he looks at himself he must sink into despair, and cry out, "then it cannot be I that am intended as the beloved one." He sees himself to be all ugliness and corruption, only fit to keep company with the poor beggar Lazarus as he lay at the rich man's door, covered with disease, in poverty, and rags!

But, mark now, my anxious brother, could we have read all that was passing in that poor beggar man's mind as he lay then in his misery, how would the scene have been changed. What are his rags and his poverty to him? or even his disease? He looked into the rich mans halls, but they were nothing to him, all he craved was a few crumbs from his sumptuously furnished table! He may have

thought of earthly thrones and empires, but all were below his notice. Listen to him, as he gazes at the person of Christ knowing his relationship, and eternal blessedness in Him.

"I am not of this world! Talk of glory and of grandeur! What are empires, potentates and crowns? I take a butterfly and find more glory on that painted wing than you can shew me in polished Greece or mighty Rome in all their glory! do you start, and mutter fool? What if the butterfly sported but a few hours in a sunbeam and then perished? It knew no waning glory but died when the sun of its day was set. What is time? I am living in eternity! in which a day or a thousand years are the same thing! I am Lazarus the beggar now; you are an emperor, and look down upon me as if a mammoth gazed upon a worm!" But wait a moment! Paul takes in a whole life of sorrow in that phrase of his " This light affliction"—not afflictions, as of many, but it encloses in its circle a whole life crowded in with tribulations—" which is but for a moment." Then wait a moment, Lazarus falls asleep on Christ's bosom—see the beggar now! Behold him in his new estate, in his eternal blessedness! "Where is your boasted empire? yonder glorious sun looking down upon a grain of sand, does not present so great a contrast as the beggar and the emperor now! compare my glory with all you can boast about. Yours is the flower of grass which fades and droops and dies! mine is infinite in fulness of glory and eternal in continuance!" Behold poor Lazarus "changed in a moment, in the winkling of an eye! Fashioned like unto His glorious body!"

"What that earth my home? no, I am not of that world! I am changed! those elements have now no influence on me! I am risen above their laws! my home is in the radiant train of Him who guides the stars! who holdeth up vast universal nature by the word of His power." "For by him were ALL THINGS CREATED, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And he is the Head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." (Col. i. 16, &c.) "I am a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 30). What is thy time, bubble, emperor? Lazarus is now in personal enjoyment of that immeasurable legacy. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory," (John xvii. 24). Then, no place can be too distant, no

space too wide for Him! yea more, for me, to compass.

Forgive me my brother, I seem to be stretching my expanding thoughts too far. I am a Son of God! (1 John iii. 1.) Born from above! no longer a groveling child of night, but awake from the sleep in death, a child of eternal day! What now remains for such an one? To mope and grovel in the dust of earth? No. But, though groaning being burdened, yet stretching upwards in desire and holy longings, in glorious expectation, winging onward by precious faith, I live with my eternal head, my risen and exalted Christ; the loved one of his tender heart; the cherished fair one in whom his glorious soul delights; whom he himself has made ALL FAIR; whom he delights to hold communion with even now, and to whom with beaming love he whispers—when he sees the tear-drop trembling in the eye of imploring penitence fear not I have blotted out thy sin! "Thou art all fair MY LOVE, there is no spot in thee." Oh holy glorious mystery! What God hath cleansed shall I call common or unclean? Nay, nay. But living in the consciousness of faith, that since eternal truth has said so, not a spot remains! Then, rather raising still the single eye of ravished and confiding love, I look again and trace another ray of glory. Where he is sitting, there I sit too; exalted high above all heavens, and although in this tabernacle every moment groaning being burdened, yet as I stand in oneness of life and blessedness in Him, a new-creature in Him. "As he is, so am I in this world." Is he eternally beloved of the Father? So am I! Is he ever more acceptible in the presence of the Father? So am I! Is he eternally delivered from condemnation, having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself-though once, as the Surety of his body the church, he bowed beneath her heavy load? so am I! Is he exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high? So am I! In eternal union in Him. When he arose, I was in him, and by virtue of that union, when he arose, I arose; as Peter sweetly sings "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath BEGOTTEN US AGAIN unto a lively hope BY THE RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. i. 3); and again Paul declares "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Who were raised together and made to sit together? Christ and his church! The King eternal, immortal [and for a little season] invisible; and the QUEEN eternal, immortal [and whose beauty is now also for a little season invisible! But then, "When the HEAD-STONE shall be brought forth with shouting's, crying grace, grace unto it." The infinite expanse shall furnish with endless delights the eternal King of glory and his all glorious Queen!

Cheer up my afflicted brother; the Lord the Spirit sweetly expand your heart with a knowledge of these glorious realities: and then you shall find, the more you brood over them, the greater will they appear; and yet, as they open out in all their infinite fulness of blessedness, the precious tendency will be to gather up your thoughts and affections, out of sense and sensible objects, into the Person and glory of Christ. For the greater the prize, the more does it sink the worm Jacob into nothing. The more we see of and realize the infinite extent and glory of the inheritance, the more are we compelled to look away from miserable contemptible self, in our search after the title deeds which assure us that the inheritance is all our own. And as by the blessed teaching and ministry of the Spirit we are led to fix our wavering gaze on "Jesus only" and are led to calculate what he is, and what he possesses, and by the precious unction of the Holy One we begin to know a precious Christ, in the Almighty majesty of his power; in the infinite expanse of his wisdom; in his boundless fulness of all grace; in the unsearchable riches of his love, compassion, tenderness, and bounty towards his poor and needy afflicted ones, over whom he delights to spread out the eternal wing of his protection as he gathers them up one by one saying "This is bone of my bone." The more I say, we are thus led to an apprehension of the greatness of salvation, and all that is connected with it, the more will it kill us to self and all the devices that by nature fill our hearts; carrying us above things passing and changeable, to the contemplation of the mind and will of our covenant God, and the astonishing manifestations thereof, in that "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them INHERIT THE THRONE OF GLORY." (Hannah's Song, 1 Sam. ii. 8.)

Now observe my beloved brother. Poor afflicted Hannah was brought by a most wonderful process to know this mighty truth. But how was it brought about? The Lord help you to compare notes with her to day; What is the constant unremitting source of all thy continual sorrow and bitterness of soul? dear tempest-tossed little-faith! How simple and precious are the testimonies of the Spirit in his word! It is thy BARRENNESS that causes thee so much misery daily, is it not? At the throne of grace; in the house of God; while reading his precious word; or in your attempts at meditation; you are sighing within on account of your barren frames of mind, and saying with Job "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was

in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle."

But how was Hannah brought up out of all her calculations after the flesh, to see, know, and experience the blessedness of being made rich? The Lord left her for a long season to bemoan her barrenness, until she was so far brought down into the dust as to describe herself as "a woman of a sorrowful spirit." Truly the Lord's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts! it is by this very process he still brings all his sorrowful spirited Hannahs, to feel in the valley of deep humiliation how utterly barren they are in themselves, that they may be compelled to go out of self to "Jesus only." But the blessedness of the teaching stands in this, not in the misery felt within, but in the fulness of all grace and glory which is found in Jesus when we get at Him. We go for present help, but when we find Him, He not only gives us a present blessing, but opens to the wondering sorrowful one "things to come." This so astonished king David, "and David the king came and sat before the Lord, and said, who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house that thou hast brought me hitherto? and yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God," (1 Chron. xvii. 6). But like Hannah, and like David, it is through felt barrenness and felt needs, arising upon us at every turn in the wilderness journey. that we come into a position in experience, that makes these glorious revelations of Jesus absolutely necessary to keep us from sinking into black despair.

There never was a full discovery made to a child of God, of the glories of Christ, but as he was brought into such a condition in experience as to need it; therefore the Lord fix it upon thy soul, my brother, that if you are being brought very low into the dust of nothingness, and art daily discovering more and more that causeth thee to cry out, "Behold I am vile," each step in the downward path is bringing thee nearer to the spot where thou shalt be brought to sit before the Lord, and see thyself in Christ, and hear Him say to thee, while the Spirit fills thee with joy and peace in believing, "Thou art all fair my love; there is no spot in thee."

"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." Amen,

IMMANUEL'S PORTRAIT OF HIS BRIDE.

(No. 3.)

"Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."—Solomon's Song iv. 7.

SUCH are the nature and properties of spiritual life as developed in the daily experience of every child of God, that David draws this conclusion respecting all those who are at ease, "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God" (Psal. lv. 19).

It is a common thing to meet persons who appear to be very pious, and are ever ready to talk about the many floating topics which serve to amuse the religious world, but who look at you as blank as an idiot the moment you begin to talk to them about the daily conflict arising from the knowledge which Solomon refers to, when he says, "All thy people Israel, which SHALL know EVERY MAN the plague of his own heart" (1 Kings viii. 38). I confess I never meet such, but the words of David—"no changes"—cross my mind, and we might sum it up in two short words, NO LIFE!

But look, my beloved exercised brother, at the conclusion this brings us to on the other side of the question. You are full of changes, and these often fill you with fears lest you have no part or lot in the matter; whereas, these constant changes, with their attendant exercises, prove beyond a question, that you are truly alive spiritually! and in spite of all Satan's suggestions, and the prevalency of your own unbelief, you may venture to make the bold statement of the afflicted Job, "The root of the matter is found in me." Life is the root; Christ is the Life; "He that hath the Son, hath life:" and as sure as life is there, the plague of the heart will be discovered; YEA, AND DAILY MOURNED OVER TOO! However, that which I so much desire by the Lord's help, to set clearly and simply before my fellow-prisoners of hope, is the soul comforting truth, that the very distress and affliction of soul which arises out of the knowledge in feeling of the plague of the heart, is the new-born child's ever present witness, that in Christ he is "all fair."

But, why is it I thus dwell upon this point, and recur to it again and again? Simply because, in my own daily experience I find my choicest cordials come this way. I am full of tossings; now as cold in my feelings and affections (Christ-ward) as a stone; then beset within by a train of gross imaginations accompanied by a highly-coloured panoramic representation of by-gone-scenes of dreadful evil, towards which the abominable flesh still turns as to that which

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 21.

it desires as its food; again, full of vain flights in aerial castle-building; then, full of quarelling and discontent; anon, calling the truth of all that is blessed in question, or having the mind distracted by the passage through it, of words so fearful, that hell itself alone can be the mint where they are forged. All these, with constant darkness of soul, and ten thousand other things, at which it is well not even to hint, form the substance of that which I find daily arising as the plague of my heart.

On reviewing the above sentence, I had nearly drawn my pen through it, feeling as though it is improper to be so plain, but I set it down in the fear of God, it is true; and I know I have many sorrowing companions in the same dark path; then, why should I be ashamed to speak out, because the Pharisee and the dead professor will sneer?

Now, out of all this, whence arise the precious cordials, of which, when the Spirit opens, I drink and forget my poverty and remember my misery no more?

It is thus. The working in development of this plague of the heart, like the law of sin in the members, spoken of by Paul, produces such unutterable distress in my renewed mind, and I am rendered thereby so totally miserable in my own feelings, that at last, I become like a person of delicate mind and constitution would become, if shut up in a close, dark cell, containing everything that can be thought of as most filthy, disgusting, and abominable. Indeed, in such a cell, I groan, being burdened.

There is, however, a window to my cell, which opens towards the rising sun. It was a long season before this dark window was opened-and then I knew not what scenes and glorious prospects it looked out upon; nevertheless, even then, morning by morning, as the sun arcse, its ravs would find their way through many a chink. and many a sweet fresh-morning-breeze has been wafted through the narrow inlets, to give me a foretaste of the sweetness and purity of the atmosphere without, and to make the bondage in that vile sink of abominations within, the more detestable. Long did I strive, and ardently did I desire to thrust back the barrier to that which I felt could only enable me to exist in such a "den and cave of the earth" (Heb. xi. 38). At length the desired and longed-for moment came -" He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth" came! He threw back the window, I believe, never to be closed again! What I saw, felt, and enjoyed, no words of mine can ever paint. It was like the scene which entranced the

Queen of Sheba—I had heard of Him by the hearing of the ear. Now my eyes beheld Him for myself, and not another. had not been told me of the glory of his person, the greatness of his power, the extent of his wisdom, the preciousness of his love, the tenderness of his compassion, his fulness of all grace, the riches of his blood, the royal robe of his righteousness, his faithfulness to his promise, and the power of his voice. "When I saw Him, I fell at his feet, as dead!" But now arises the greatest wonder of all. He drew near to me, and gave strength to the eye of faith, enabling me to look into his glorious face, I "With open face," unclouded by unbelief, untarnished by sin, "with open face BEHOLDING," looking into Christ, beholding myself in Christ, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." Astonishing circumstance! "I was changed into the same image!" Then I saw, that it was possible for poor worm Jacob, although dwelling in a prison house, to be pronounced " all fair."

But now, since that memorable moment, what has been the effect of the abominations among which I am compelled to lodge? They become a million times more disgusting daily, and cause me to long for the blessed moment when I shall leave them at the brink of the Jordan. But do I sit down in the midst of the mass of corruption, and smite my breast in despair, and wring my hands in hopeless misery? No. There stands the open window. It may be dark night, so that nothing can be seen. It may be a winter season, so that all things are frozen up, and the feelings numbed by the cold. It may be a terrific tempest is raging, which threatens to swallow up myself, cell, and all, and that no sounds can be heard, but the fierce howling of the maddened whirlwind, or the bursting peals of the rolling thunder, and nothing seen but the gleaming blade of the sword of God, as in its wrathful fury, it is thrust hither and thither, as though it would drink up the life of the world. It is a lesson that can only be learned by experience, at all such times, to fly "as doves to their windows." It is an awful scene we look out upon sometimes! but as we grow in grace, even the terrific majesty of the scene, when these storms come on, supply a subject for faith to rest upon, and lead out the soul in confiding hope, rather than into confusion and dismay.

A certain nobleman desirous of convincing his lady that an impending calamity which had filled her mind with terror, was in the loving hands of a covenant Father, having exhausted all his powers of persuasion without effect, suddenly drew his sword, and throwing himself into an apparent fury, made several desperate passes at his

wife. She calmly sat still, as one who felt not the slightest alarm, or apprehended the least danger. He stopped, and demanded of her, "Are you not afraid?" "Afraid," said she, "no; that sword is in the hand of my dear husband, who I know loves me well. That sword carries terror to his enemies, but it has nothing in it but protection for me." "Remember then," said he, "that the impending storm is also in the hand of one who loves you with infinite love, and while His terrific sword shall slay his and our enemies, He will cover the heads of his children in the day of battle! The power of the mighty arm that wields the sword, will, as we know Him, inspire our hearts with confidence. Then, while we admire Him the more, we shall dread Him the less."

So now, whatever transpires within, I must fly to the window. Yes, in the long dark winter nights, cold and weary, still I must fly to the window! The more offensive the cell becomes, the more earnestly do I hang out at the window, and with outstretched neck and earnest gaze, look towards the blessed sun rising. Nor is it all gloom and misery either! for He giveth me "songs in the night." "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands." And sometimes, even in the dark night, while thus waiting for Him at the window, I forget the things that are behind me in the cell, and my meditation of Him is sweet. It is thus often, before sun-rise, I hear a still small voice, whispering, "Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee;" and with the whisper comes a secret power, so that I can believe it is so, though I cannot see it, and that too, in spite of the cell.

Now, my brother, since we have got into a peculiarly personal strain, we will take another step in pointing out the channel of meditation through which these precious whispers come. As the Lord helps you to follow by the Spirit's sweet teaching, tracing out link by link in the blessed chain; you shall find the same results.

It is by "considering Him," even Christ, in the glory of his person, I find my meditation of Him to be sweet, and this maketh me glad in the Lord. But his glory stands not in his greatness and power alone, but in the union of this majesty to our very nature, and therefore, to every member of his one body. It is this which renders Him, in his precious suitability to all our needs, the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.

But, where do we begin? David gives us the key-note in Psalm clxv, as mentioned just now—" I will remember the days of old," or, "I will call to mind the ancient estate." I will travel back into

the everlasting covenant! I will take my stand on the threshold of time, and look out over the immeasurable expanse, and call to mind the transactions of the MIGHTY THREE! I muse upon the eternal flowings of the Father's everlasting love, in the embraces of which I lay folded up, "bound up in the bundle of life," in Him who was from everlasting in the bosom of the Father. I call to mind the "PURPOSE and GRACE" of the Father of all mercies, given to me in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Tim. i. 9). Then, from this point—if so we may call it—I begin to reckon the glorious links in the everlasting chain. It is a chain of purposes, which God hath purposed in Himself, and every link is full of grace and truth.

Oh, how does even a little precious, felt, living, knowledge of this eternal purpose, cause a poor sin-burdened child of God to lean out of self, and away from self, in sweet meditations of those glorious things which are folded up therein! How did it swallow up the heart of Paul, when in like spiritual remembrances of the ancient estates he breaks forth "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints." What a blessed companion does every self-abhoring child of God, find in blessed Paul! How sweetly do we see the image of Jesus here, "He made Himself of no reputation!" How different to the starched up, respectable, piety of our day! "Less than the least of all saints!" Yes, and the more powerfully Divine light shines in the soul, the more will it discover the excessive villany of the heart, "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." It is under the all-powerful rays of this light shining within, that thoughts and motives, such as pass and repass unnoticed almost through the minds of dead professors, become in the estimation of a living child of God, as black as hell! We are sure it was no outward gross sin that Paul lived in, that caused him to speak in such terms of self-abasement. No; it was the effect of a deep knowledge, by great spiritual illumination, of the inherent corruption of the motives of the flesh, which so filled him with self-abhorrence. And I venture to tell thee, my beloved brother, that the brighter this light shines in thee, while it will daily discover to thee more and more of the excellency, preciousness, and suitability of our most glorious Christ, it will at the same time, make thee appear to thyself more like a walking monster, than a saint of God. But the effect of this, will be to lift thy mind above that vain conceit which "almost Christians" are constantly thrusting forward, namely, "Progressive sanctification," and lead thee to glory in a sanctification which is eternally perfect, and therefore can know nothing of progression, as it is written, "For, by one offering HE HATH PKR-

FECTED FOR EVER, them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). I am compelled to break off at every step; for, while we are seeking to enter a little into the glory of the Person of Christ, it is needful if we would obtain a knowledge of both parties, that we keep constantly in view, the characteristics of those who are the blessed partakers of his holiness, and therefore ever beheld in Him "all fair;" although in themselves black as the Ethiopian, and as unchangeably spotted as the leopard. But to return.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST: and to make all men see, what is the FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY, which from the beginning of the world HATH BEEN HID IN GOD, who CREATED ALL THINGS BY JESUS CHRIST: to the intent [or for this purpose] that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by [or through] the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the ETERNAL PURPOSE which He PURPOSED in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 8).

How full of astonishing glory is this testimony, respecting the purposes of our God! Observe, my brother, they are eternal, therefore unchangeable. They are all purposed in Christ, our own Immanuel! our own Brother, and eternal Head! They were purposed to this end, that in their development in time an eternal exhibition might be made of the manifold wisdom of God! Who shall dive into the immortal depths of the wisdom which contrived the whole with such a design? even, that the infinite Jehovah might, for his own eternal glory, unfold before the unknown principalities and powers, which now and shall ever occupy the heavenly place, the infinite depths of his Divine wisdom! But, astonishment knows no bounds, when we look at the objects in, and upon whom this wisdom is displayed, and for whom these purposes were formed! Look at thyself, poor needy one, in all thy utter helplessness and unworthiness! Come, sit down with me for a few moments at the window! "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of HIS calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." The riches of the glory of THY inheritance in Christ is beyond our powers of computation, who then shall measure the greater glory! the eternal glory of Jehovah, in the exaltation of our own nature in everlasting union with Himself in the Person of Jesus, the Son of his love!

Paul in contemplating this glorious subject exclaims, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh!" The

fact itself is a great mystery but the PURPOSE contained in the mystery of that glorious manifestation of the wisdom of God, carries out the mind in unutterable wonder at the riches of that grace which should gather up into everlasting life and blessedness, such worms of the earth as all God's living Jacob's feel themselves to be.

But, mark again; Paul rejoices in the thought, knowing as he did, the blessedness of such a faith's view of the subject as the Spirit had communicated to him, that his Gospel, which contained this good news to poor needy sinners, was to this end, "to make all the saints of God see, what is the Fellowship of the mystery, that is, what it is to be partners with God the Father in all that Christ is and has. Yes, in all that which the Spirit by Paul calls, "The unsearchable riches of Christ." And all this "NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. i. 9).

The beginning of the development of this glorious chain of purposes, which were hid in God, was manifested, as Paul blessedly presents it to us, in the fact that Jesus Christ created all things! Here we meet the first rays of the glory of HIS POWER. alone, under our present condition, as fallen into sin, can only tend to fill us with terror. It is, as we find stamped upon the numberless evidences of his Almighty power, the PURPOSE it contains, that we begin to adore our Brother born for adversity in all. It is, as we are enabled to turn the eye in simple and confiding love, from Him who sitteth upon the circle of the heavens, to the babe in the manger of Bethlehem; and to perceive, or recognize, by the demonstration of the Spirit in our hearts, that they are one and the same glorious Person; that we are prepared to enter into the blessed fulness of the PURPOSE which led the "mighty God" to take upon himself the form of a servant, and to be found in fashion as a man.

We see the blessed chain of purposes in all its splendour presented to our God and Father, by our glorious Mediator in his prayer, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, "That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me: and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made PERFECT in one." Here we find the PURPOSE of all, that they, the body of Christ, may be made PERFECT in one. Thus, wherever we travel in meditation, over the many precious

links in the chain of purposes which we find first rising in the infinite bosom of Jehovah in eternity past, and taking in every outgoing and act of love manifested before time began, and then including in it every act in visible creative-power and wisdom, in bringing into being time itself, and all the things of time; and also embracing those spiritual manifestations of lovingkindness, especially Christ's incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection, recorded for our comfort in the word of God; and finally the putting forth of the energy of the Spirit in our hearts, to give us a knowledge of the glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ; the whole chain will be found to resolve itself into this one PURPOSE, that we may be made PERFECT in one. So that at all times, the Holy Three that bear record in heaven, may look upon the body of Christ, and confirm the wonderful testimony which He ever delights to bear respecting her beauty and perfection, as she stands in Himself, saying, "Thou art all fair my love; there is no spot in thee." And this, the Lord help thee to remember, my brother, is "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." Could we but keep our minds stayed upon this most precious point, all that we are in our changeable selves, would be cast behind the back, and it would be our daily delight to "remember the days of old," while forgetting the things which are behind, we press towards the mark for the prize.

Moreover, we are sure the Lord's dear ones will find, that however they may be cumbered with much serving, entangled with the affairs of this life, bowed down with afflictions and sorrows, crushed under a sense of sin, filled with rebellion because of the roughness of the way, or perplexed by the dulness of their spiritual apprehension of things, and the coldness and hardness of their hearts; they will never find a moment's comfort from brooding over these things, or their effects; for, although these circumstances may be distressing in their present effects upon the mind, yet they are all connected with the precious links of that eternal chain of purposes. founded on good will towards us, and glory to God in the highest. Yes, as much so as those precious things which bring peace and joy into the soul by their presence. They are intended to work together for our good, and they do so blessedly, when they compel us to go to the open window, and look out of self, away from all that belongs to the creature, to Jesus only.

We have now looked a little at the parties concerned in the testimony, "Thou art all fair." But we have still to muse upon the blessedness of the condition, which we resume in our next.

[&]quot;Let the peace of God rule in your heart." Amen.

IMMANUEL'S PORTRAIT OF HIS BRIDE.

(No. 4.)

"Thou art all fair my love; there is no spot in thee."—Solomon's Song iv. 7.

THE poor beggar Lazarus; the broken-hearted prodigal; weeping Peter, though a blasphemer; the wondering and adoring Thomas after all his unbelief; yea, and Paul the persecutor, were all brought to a knowledge of the glorious truth in its fulness, that their fairness and perfection was not according to their own works, but solely according to God's eternal purpose and grace, given to them in Christ Jesus, before the world began. To confirm us in the truth of which the Holy Ghost has left us a most full and glorious statement in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

The Apostle begins by pouring forth from his full heart a volume of blessings at the remembrance of the days of old! "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who HATH blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ." Paul then counts up some of the leading steps in this blessedness, tracing all up to the "ancient estates," before the foundation of the world "According as he hath CHOSEN us in Him." Paul then points out the first purpose in this choice, namely, that the church of Christ should come up before God in the person of Christ, "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish!" Yes, in such a condition, that he, who chargeth his angels with folly, and of whom it is said, the heavens are not clean in his sight, looking upon the Bride, the Lamb's wife, shall say to her, "THOU art ALL fair MY love, there is no spot in thee." This is indeed to be "holy and without blame " before him in love."

Had the Holy Ghost stopped at this point of blessedness, the purpose of our covenant God would have been full of grace and loving-kindness sufficient to occupy our tongues in eternal anthems of praise. But we must go a step above our interest in Christ, in seeking for the final purpose of our God and Father in all that he has bestowed upon us in our glorious Head. Here we shall trace the grand, yet unsearchably profound reason why, in the eternal flowings of his unchangeable love, our covenant God has made all things so secure, that no power in hell, sin, death, or the devil can ever pluck one of his royal children out of his hands. Surely all

whose minds are led into the glorious subject must see that the honour that is put upon a vessel of mercy, in thus being raised up into such a state of eternal beauty and spotless purity, as to be the everlasting admiration of Jehovah himself, and the eternal monument or exhibition of the glory of his wisdom, grace and power, cannot but eternally eclipse by its splendours, all other purposes of blessedness, connected with our personal deliverance from the miseries of hell, and everlasting enjoyment of the highest bliss in heaven.

The heart of queen Esther doubtless swelled with delight at being delivered from her bondage and captivity, and endowed as the chosen one of her royal husband, with all the elegancies and advantages of his court; but if love to the person of the king ruled in her heart, how far above all these things would be the knowledge, that it was his chiefest delight, daily to gaze upon her beauty, to pronounce her all fair, and to hold her up, or seat her by his side on his royal throne, as the greatest glory of his empire! Yet such is the case with the perfect, spotless church in Christ; as it is written, "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah [that is, my delight is in her] and thy land Beulah: for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."

What a gloriously clear apprehension of these Divine realities was given by the Spirit to the Apostle as he goes on to trace the steps by which the whole was completed in covenant in the person of Christ before time began.

Having pointed out the choice of the church as to every individual member of that mystical body of Christ; in accordance with that most glorious statement of the same minute ordering, and calling up into covenant existence, the whole of the living mass of which that eternal temple shall be composed, when the head-stone is brought forth with shouting, which is given us by the prophet David as he was speaking in the person of Christ, at verse 15 in Psalm cxxxix. "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." Or, as some read with more literal adherence to the Hebrew, "My bones were not concealed before thee, when I was made in secret," agreeing with that most precious testimony, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. v. 30). And these were all called up in the secret purpose of Jehovah; must have been

so, to have been chosen and blessed there and then, really. Yes, more really than the architect puts upon paper, every minute part and decoration of his designed building, as he rears it in his mind, and sees it grow in all its fitness of parts into a temple, that shall stand as a monument in ages to come, of the largeness of mind, the power of invention, and the clearness of perception, the wisdom, the taste, and the knowledge of order and beauty of him who designed it all. But moreover, the literal reading adds, "And wrought like an embroidery in the lowermost parts of the earth."

Some refer this to the incarnation of Christ, but that which follows certainly fixes it as taking in the subject before us.—"The ancient estate" when Jehovah called up the church into covenant existence that he might marry her to his only-begotten Son; and in her provide for him a help-meet, "all fair," all glorious within, with raiment of wrought gold. Embroidery indeed! and in thus calling her up into covenant visibility to be seen, admired, and loved by the Mighty Three, Jehovah was but exercising the same power and prerogation of which the Holy Ghost by Paul gives us a precious instance in (Rom. iv. 17), "As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not. As though they were."

But David proceeds, "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect [or, as some, my unformed substance] and in thy book all my members were written [or, as in the margin, and in thy book all of them—what? is it not his bones?—were written] which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. [Or, as to the days when they were or should be fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."] In what book were they written? Was it not the Lamb's book of life? and how blessed is it to know that as they stand unerasably written there, the first name which appears in the book is that of our most glorious Christ; as it is written, "Lo, I come [in the volume (or more strictly, in the beginning, or at the head) of the book it is written of me] to do thy will O God."

"This be my first elect he said
Then chose the church in Christ her head."

Now this brings us to the second glorious step in this eternal covenant ordered in all things and sure, in which the eternal spotless beauty and perfection of the church was provided, long before she herself was called into actual existence, and therefore, long before she could stand in need of all that, which was included in this glorious covenant act of God.

We see the church chosen in Christ with this express design. that she should be holy and without blame before God in love. The persons of the chosen of God were thus foreknown. Paul in another place (Rom. viii. 29.) tells us that "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, conformed to the image of his Son." The words to be are in Italics, therefore not in the original. nor should they be inserted here, as they change the primary sense of the passage; which is, perhaps, better interpreted in the Syriac, which reads thus, "And from the beginning he knew them, AND SEALED THEM WITH THE IMAGE OF HIS SON." Now, God the Father foreknew his chosen as thus conformed to the image of his Son, and standing in this conformity "all fair." He "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself," Jesus Christ hereby becoming as expressed by Paul, (Rom. 8. 29), "The first-born among many brethren," all of whom bore, were sealed with, or conformed to, his image. An eternal family likeness will be beheld in this glorious royal brotherhood: and because of this, every, at present, bowed down and heart-broken child of God, who now groans being burdened, shall find the precious truth realized in the solemn day, when all shall be brought to the closing point. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: "BECAUSE AS HE IS. SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD!" This is indeed most glorious, and the realization of its fulness by faith, in the heart, is most precious; for it lifts us up out of all our conceptions of foulness and corruption in self, as we are sinners, and carries up the thoughts and affections far above all time bubbles, and fixes them in that glorious circle of purpose, formed by our eternal predestination; out of which no circumstance in time could possibly pluck us: since, like Noah's ark, it contained provision for the whole passage through time, and its floods of sin, and to crown the whole, "Jehovah shut us in!" (Gen. vii. 16).

We behold then, this second glorious step, in the "Ancient estate." The body of Christ bearing his image, predestinated unto the adoption of children; but mark, again, it is not according to our works, but according to God's own purpose and grace which was given [blessed be God for the mercy, it was not merely offered but given] us in Christ Jesus before the world began," and that as Paul blessedly expresses in this place (Eph. i. 5), "According to the good pleasure of His will."

Having folded all up in these two gracious acts of choice and predestination, all that which could make the church eternally glorious, and having confirmed the whole as He, the eternal Father. beheld it in the Lamb's book of Life, which may well be termed, Jehovah's eternal book of beauties! Behold now the last act which completes the mighty design. By the provisions engaged upon in covenant by the glorious Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and contained, enrolled, and confirmed by mutual oath :-- "Wherein God. willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." The choice and the predestination having made all secure. The Father having presented the Church to His well beloved Son to be his help meet, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" the Son having accepted the donation at the Father's hands, and by so doing, taken upon himself all that could or should be contracted of debt by his wife, the Spirit also bearing witness to the marriage contract, approving the deed, and going forth in love in anticipation of the fulfilment of His part of of the covenant contract. All being one in love, one in will, there-The Church, in her predestinated perfection. fore one in purpose. according to the good pleasure of the will of God, to the praise of the glory of his grace, was made unchangeably then and there "ACCEPTED in the beloved" not only acceptable; but all circumstances having been taken into account, and provided for by the grace given to us in Christ Jesus: to confirm the whole, and ratify the glorious purpose and design, Jehovah ACCEPTED THE CHURCH IN COVENANT, as she stood thus in the Son of his love. thus accepted before time began, she has ever remained in union to her most glorious head, her fall in Adam having been foreknown and provided against in the predestination, could not affect her standing in Christ, out of whom she could never fall; because, as she reposed there in Christ's comeliness put upon her, underneath her were the everlasting arms.

But here again, that we may catch another soul animating glimpse of the glory of the whole design, we must refer to the final purpose which runs up and through the whole. It is given to us by the Apostle in the sixth verse, and again in the twelfth verse, " To the Praise of the Glory of his grace." "That we should be to the praise of his glory." And again, Peter, looking at the same most deep, and blessedly profound subject says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, [made so on purpose] that ye should shew forth the Praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his maryellous.

light" (1 Pet. ii. 9), and again, "This people have I formed for

myself, "THEY SHALL SHEW FORTH MY PRAISE."

Who shall estimate the blessedness of not only being redeemed, delivered from curse, condemnation, sin, death, and hell, and raised up in eternal justification and perfection in Christ, to live in everlasting unfading happiness with Him for evermore. But beyond all this, which constitutes the personal blessedness in enjoyment of our inheritance in Christ, there is a glory which excelleth, that which was the ultimate design of all God's purposes of grace, which adds a dignity to the previous blessedness, which rises far beyond all our powers of computation, which includes in it what Paul refers to at verse 18, "The riches of the Glory of His inheritance in the Saints."

It is here, we shall by the Spirit's illumination, begin to forget ourselves, and to leave out of the calculation all that we know about ourselves; and as we contemplate the divine honour and dignity which is thus conferred upon us, say as Mary of old. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word," and while we thus "Call to mind the ancient estate," and remember the final purpose of our God in all he has predestinated us to, we shall, while taking in the grand thought, that throughout the eternal ages it is the purpose of God, to point to the Church. as she stands the monument of his rich and sovereign grace, adorned as she shall be, a fit Bride for such a Bridegroom; as one, raised up, according to his purpose and grace, and rendered so transcendently beautiful and glorious, that all the mighty acts of God displayed in that vast array, that we now behold in the immense expanse, shall sink into their glowworm nothingness, when brought into competition with THIS WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN. we begin to drink a little at this deep fountain of eternal wonders. we shall be led up in our meditations above and beyond the present creeping conditions of caterpillar life in which we are grovelling in dust and corruption here; and long for the moment, when we shall fall asleep, that we may hasten through the chrysalis state of death. that we too, like our glorious risen Head, may burst forth in his likeness! and put on our fair robes, and our royal ornaments, that we may bask in the eternal sunshine of His presence, shine in His glory, and for ever magnify the riches of His grace. But it is as our hearts expand to take in a little of the fulness of the royal bounty of our God, that we can listen to his precious testimony with adoring gratitude, wonder, love, and praise. "Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee." And we can take our

harp, and in the fulness of the blessedness join with beloved Mary again, "My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden, for behold from henceforth ALL GENERATIONS SHALL. CALL ME BLESSED! For he that is mighty hath magnified me and holy is his name!"

How greatly God hath magnified the Holy Bride of Jesus, we have still to learn! However, a few more precious testimonies must be looked at before we have done with the little opening of the divine subject, on which it is my soul's delight to dwell while waiting upon the Lord, and hanging out of self and sin, the world and misery, reaching forth, towards the mark for the prize of the High calling of God in Christ Jesus. How high a calling it is, this glorious final purpose of our covenant God, that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace, will tend to open up to us as we pass on to look at the means provided and the effectual development thereof in the ministry of the Spirit.

But before we proceed with this further opening of the subject, I must pause a moment and ask thee a question, beloved little-faith. How do these testimonies operate upon thy mind? Well do I know, that all depends on the state of thy spiritual health before the Lord. If thou art in robust health, thy hunger after the bread of life, thy thirst after the water of life, is daily becoming more and more pressing. Like the sleep, so the food of a labouring man is sweet, and to such alone, spiritually, is the Person of Christ, and the riches of the Father's grace in Him truly sweet. It is the man who has had his heart brought down by labour; it is he who has fallen down from every high place after the flesh, or the rudiments of this world, who by the overturning of all his fair plans and promised good things, has truly fallen down with NONE TO HELP (Psalm cvii. 12). Yes, both within and without! The greatest earthly good tarnished, the fine gold become dim! a sting in everything! just like David when he sat down to call to mind the ancient estate, (See Psalm cxliii). "For the enemy hath persecuted my soul," not the body only but the soul, in bitter malice and with crushing effect; "he hath smitten my life down to the ground:" like Jonah, an awful storm has come on, and the poor bewildered one wakes up from his quiet repose in a profession of religion, and now nothing will do but over he must go! He can no longer remain in that ship! This sleeping place is no longer his rest, he is cast out! He thinks, to tumble into hell! But no, he is not a Moab, he shall not settle upon his lees, but he shall be emptied from vessel to vessel'

(Jer. xlviii. 11.) Fear not dear child of God, if thou art being tumbled out of some comfortable nest, it is only that thou mayest be brought forth into a truly healthy state of soul; and the time shall come when thou wilt bless the hand and the love that would not suffer thee to be content with a sluggard's portion! no, your life must be smitten down to the ground, that like Jonah you may learn by personal knowledge and not by hearsay, that "Salvation is of the Lord!" "He hath made me to dwell in darkness, like those that have been long dead;" such darkness that you can see no evidences of life, and seem to be like those who have never lived spiritually, at all, "Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me;" it is a fearful place, my brother, to come into, overwhelmed with a sense of shame and guilt like David and Peter; overwhelmed by calamities like Job, overwhelmed by cares like Martha; overwhelmed with fears like the disciples in the cloud and when they fled from their master; overwhelmed with sorrows like David weeping for Absalom. This will bring down the heart with labour. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities, but a WOUNDED spirit who can bear? It is an overwhelmed spirit, again, like poor Jonah, cast out of his sight at the bottom of the sea: but it is just at this point, when his heart within him became desolate that David sits down to remember the days of old! if thou my brother hast been thus brought through fire and through water out into God's wealthy place, although, in yourself you may be compelled to dwell in a body of death, full of corruption, (Rom. vii. 24), with me, you will shout for joy as you travel over the vast and glorious field of blessedness contained in the ancient settlements especially if the Spirit whispers "All are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

On the other hand, if thou art truly a living child of God—and the properties of the magnet will decide this question—and yet put aside these glorious matters connected with our "High-calling," there are yet some overturning visitations awaiting thee, before, with a DESOLATE heart, [I must confess I rejoice in the expression, because I know it in its true emptiness] thou wilt sit down and remember the days of old, and stretch forth your [empty] hands to the Lord, saying "My soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land, HEAR ME SPEEDILY," desolate hunger and thirst is impatient of delays, while unhealthy indifference, like the full soul, loatheth the honey-comb.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Amen.

IMMANUEL'S PORTRAIT OF HIS BRIDE.

(No. 5.)

"Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."—Solomon's Song iv. 7.

THE absence of a clear perception of the exceedingly great things which Jehovah has prepared for His people, causes many to go on day by day groping in the dark, and measuring themselves by themselves, and therefore often writing bitter things against themselves; whereas if their minds were occupied in contemplations on those eternally real things which are laid up for them in untouchable security, out of the reach of the world, sin, the flesh, and the devil, in the Person of our adorable Lord Jesus, how would their hearts be lifted up in grateful praises! Yes, although their pathway may be filled with thorns and briers, and many a fiery serpent may be permitted to infest their footsteps; yet with the eye of faith fixed upon the royal robe, the royal crown, the seat of honour on the throne of his glory, and the eternal companionship in the full flowings of Divine love, and communion, which await the poor broken-hearted pilgrim; these precious things, together with the testimony of the Holy Comforter, that, since we are feelingly sensible of our entire dependance on the Lord's bounty, and have a daily increasing and acute sense of spiritual need, we can be no longer DEAD IN SIN; therefore must be ETERNALLY ALIVE in Christ. All this must tend to bring about that state of experience in which Paul rejoiced, "As dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowing, YET ALWAYS REJOICING; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things!" I confess to you, my beloved brother, that I cannot be contented, until, in my measure, I am brought thus to live and walk by faith, and not according to sight; to live according to what I, as a new creature, am in Christ, and not according to what I am after the flesh. Nor can I pass through a day without putting in this plea at the throne of grace, that the Holy Comforter will give me a fuller and more expanded knowledge of the Person and glory of Christ, so that I may forget myself and the things [THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 23.

which are behind, in the contemplation of Him and the "High calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Ah! says one, I would that I could join you; but you cannot believe how exceedingly dark and confused my mind is, and how fearfully hard and cold my heart! how powerful my unbelief! and that which is worst of all, how overflowing with all evil is my base and wicked heart!

And what, my brother, if it were ten thousand times worse than it is with thee? what has that to do with thy standing in Christ, and thy perfection in Him? What if the Prince of Wales were ever so sick, ever so weak in body, ever so tired by the difficulties of a journey, or ever so defiled in his person, by having to wade through some foul muck-hill-what could these things have to do with his princely title and estate? He might be greatly distressed and disgusted by the temporary condition in which he found himself—yea, he might weep bitter tears of sorrow and distress, and feel himself to be unutterably miserable, but would it for a moment enter into his mind to say, Ah! now, by these things coming upon me, I fear there is reason to believe I am not l'rince of Wales? No. Would he not rather turn the other way, and say, Well, sad as are these present distressing annoyances, yet why should I repine? I am Prince of Wales! My royal title and estates may well weigh down a few momentary sorrows which are cast into the opposite scale! Beloved brother, could all that you so bitterly lament over before your God, touch your ETERNAL LIFE-INTEREST in Christ, then indeed there would be ground for despair; but the very power by which you feel and hate these things, and your own life in the flesh on account of them, is that which unites you eternally to your glorious Head; it is that holy, pure, undefilable life in which you "live Christ," and by virtue of which He pronounces you eternally "all fair." The dear Comforter help you to dwell on the precious fact, so that you may "drink and forget your poverty." I know it is only as the children of God come up thus out of themselves, leaning on "Jesus only," content that He should keep their beauty in store for them, in Himself, while they continue in themselves all blackness and uncomeliness, that they will live happily in the Lord, singing as they travel on, "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon."

Oh! but if the Lord would subdue my evil nature, and put it more under my controul, melt my hard heart, warm my cold affections, give me more feeling of life in prayer, carry up my wandering

thoughts, and fix them on Himself and heavenly things! What then? Would you be more beautiful, more comely, more fair, more acceptable in the sight of thy God? Does it not seem as though it would be so? or, does it not seem as though you could believe in your completeness in Christ better, if such was your experience? And yet all these calculations are based upon false prin-The Lord says, "Thou art ALL fair; there is NO spot in ciples. thee." It cannot then, in the least degree, rest upon thy experience in thyself; it must be wholly out of thyself in thy glorious all fair, and spotless Head! And it shall by-and-by appear, that all the discoveries which by the Holy Spirit's illumination you make of your own blackness and misery, is intended effectually to drive you out of, and away from self, to find refuge in Christ alone. And I add, the more completely self in ALL its properties becomes abased, the more fully and preciously will thy glorious beauty stand out in eternal contrast, to the praise of the glory of his grace, who hath made us accepted in the Beloved. The clearer the day, the blacker will Kedar's tents appear. The brighter the light, the more glorious will the golden embroidery of the curtains of King Solomon appear. Moreover, it is blessed to be brought up to the clear apprehension of the matter, that there can be no mixing of the one with the other, or defiling or spoiling of the one by the other. Our native ugliness and blackness in self, stands by itself, and shall be swallowed up in the Jordan. While our perfection and beauty in Christ stands eternally distinct and secure, waiting for us to arrive at our royal home, to put it on for ever, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life!

But how fully will all this in its blessedness appear, "when He shall come to be GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, and ADMIRED in all them that believe." Think of it, my brother, here stands the fulness of the subject, as we hinted in last lecture. "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise," or GLORY. This is the end of all, the final purpose of all. And thus again, it stands in the immutable declaration of our God, "And HIS REST SHALL BE GLORIOUS" (Isa. xi. 10).

The Lord help us, beloved little faith, to look at this portion, in

the Spirit, and to found upon it a few conclusions.

Observe, of whom it is spoken. It is "the root of Jesse," even our most glorious Christ. But where, and what is his rest? How full of glory is the testimony of the Holy Ghost, recorded in Psal. cxxxii. 13, "For Jehovah hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for his habitation! This is my REST FOR EVER: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." It is "The holy city, new Jerusa-

lem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Every living stone in this new Jerusalem, is of God's preparing, and is a blessed partaker in such a beauty and perfection, as shall make it eternally honourable and glorious! Who shall measure the extent of glory that is thus put upon these prepared people, when we contemplate the fulness of the dignity to which they are called, to which they are raised up by the Lord's own power, and therefore necessarily made meet for his wonderful purpose?

Look at the mighty thought! Jehovah, "The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace"—"The Creator of the ends of the earth;" yea, the mighty Creator of universal nature in all its immeasurable greatness, countless parts, and most glorious exhibitions of Almighty power, and infinitely wise design, puts his hand upon a poor worm Jacob, in himself full of all that is corrupt and hateful, and says, "This is my best FOR EVER." Not for a day, not as a lodging, but as an everlasting dwelling place!

How little did you or I, my brother, think, when the Lord first laid his strong hand upon us, and crushed us into the dust beneath his power, that the gracious words which accompanied that act were these, "This poor prodigal is my rest for ever! here will I dwell!" How little did Benjamin think, when he was led back a convicted criminal before the stern ruler of Egypt, that the iron chain which held him fast was a true token of the overflowings of the deep love of his nearest, dearest, tenderest brother! It was intense love that put the trembling darling of Joseph's heart in bonds, that love might find a fitting opportunity of manifesting its tenderness in setting the prisoner free, and taking him to his breast. But how little did Benjamin understand the language contained in every circumstance! Joseph had found the rest of his heart; he longed to possess himself of it: but his dream must be fulfilled, he must bring every brother into the dust at his feet, before he takes them to his bosom, and enters into his rest. But now, mark, my dear brother, what were the few moments of sorrow that Joseph in his love inflicted upon his Benjamin? Look at Joseph's heart swelling with emotion as he beholds the distress of his poor broken hearted brother! Yet delight fills his soul. But why? He knows that he has only to speak five words, and the grief of his darling will be swallowed up in unutterable joy. It is just the same still. Thou mayest be in such dismay and almost despair, because the Lord's heavy hand is upon thee, and thou art not able to escape from what appears to thee to be inevitable condemnation; that it seems as though

nothing remains for thee but a fearful looking for of judgment. But fear not, there never was a soul brought to the bar by the Spirit of God, and who has had the sentence of death passed in the court of conscience, but the issue proved that the bitterest distress was only a precurser of the most intense joy. For, crushing as may be the first grip of the Lord's hand, it would speak only of his tender love to thee, couldst thou hear the words which flow from his heart, which contain the true reason which causes him now for a moment to put thee to grief. His words are these—(The Holy Comforter engrave them upon some poor, broken, blighted, desolate heart!) "This is my REST FOR EVER; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Yea, fear not—

"Our dear Deliverer's love is such,
He cannot long delay;
Meantime that foe can't boast of much,
Who makes us watch and pray."

The greatness and glory of Him who claims Zion as his eternal rest, at once points out to us the necessary consequence of such a determination, and such a choice. It cannot be, that He who has displayed the almightiness of his power, as we see it exhibited in all the wonders of his creative might, can be at a loss for means to render his eternal rest worthy of Himself. Therefore, whatever the words in their fullest sense can contain, when he pronounces his own chosen Bride "all fair," must be most true, especially as He has revealed to us the precious truth, that it is by his own washing, by his own cleansing, by his own beautifying, that she is made "all fair."

It is all folded up in this most glorious testimony, "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it [what a gift! what a purchase price!] that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD; that He might present it to Himself A GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25).

Here the great fact is presented to us as at once eternally done, when He gave Himself for his Bride; as we have it again recorded in another place (Heb. x. 14), "For by one offering HE HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are sanctified." Now that which God the Holy Ghost pronounces "perfected for ever" must be so in a sense which our limited understandings can never fully comprehend; and which is so complete and glorious that even Almighty power could not add to it; for since God himself pronounces it complete, it follows that it is so in the infinite sense in which He speaks of perfec-

tion; and therefore, the Church thus perfected, became a fit object to be presented to Immanuel, God with us, as his eternal rest and

delight.

Moreover, in addition to the power to accomplish this purpose, in perfecting the Church, we must also contemplate the necessity for it; for it is impossible that the Holy God can choose for His ETERNAL REST any but a perfect, spotless dwelling. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Then, independent of the glory which shall ever flow forth to Jehovah's praise, arising from the incomparable beauty and perfection of his beloved Zion, his own eternal pleasure will be found in beholding, admiring, and loving this habitation of His, where He will rest in His love. He could not take pleasure in anything short of that spotless, unblemished beauty which He has put upon his eternal daughter in the Person of her most glorious Husband. But what the extent and blessedness of that beauty and perfection shall amount to when it shines forth in all its royal grandeur, who can conceive? "I in them" at eternal rest! "and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one!"

Come, my tempest-tossed brother, what think you of being a child of God?—One of the living stones in the new Jerusalem. Born from above! Living in a life and blessedness now that surpasses in glory the utmost stretch of our most noble conceptions! You cannot soar too high here! You cannot expand in your expectations beyond the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the

reality, in all its unsearchable riches and glory.

"Saints raise your expectations high; Hope all that heaven has good! Think what the blood of Christ can buy, Invaluable blood!"

Are you miserable? Cheer up! The morning cometh! It is a little short night of adversity at most. The Church now, like the moon, may be pale and ever changing; but look to the glorious east! "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Yes, He is our eternal joy. "The joy of the whole earth shall He be called." But while we contemplate his glory, the Lord help us to bear the blessed truth ever in mind, that while we delight to gaze upon Him, and say, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely," we may sit down under his shadow with great delight, and listen to his response, which flows out of his sacred heart with a joy that as far exceeds our highest sensations of exstacy, as the infinite exceeds the finite. "Thou art all fair—my love, there is no spot in thee!" Tell me, my anxious

brother, what is there in the wide world worth a thought, compared with the fulness of that little word my? we have looked a little at the person who claims this fair one. Is He not infinitely glorious? yet all that He is, and has, he has given to those He delights to call "MY LOVE;" and they stand eternally fair, unchangeably blessed in Him! What has time circumstances to do with the matter? Can your dulness of apprehension, or all that you are daily tormenting yourself about, touch or alter your beauty and perfection in Him? It is all provided against. It is all; yes, ALL! Whatever it may be that gives thee an aching heart, unfolding to thee day by day, with as much precision, according to the covenant plan, formed by infinite wisdom before time, as the movements of the planets in their orbits. But that which makes all doubly blessed, is, that every circumstance, however bitter in itself, is but to make an opening for the manifestation of the loving kindness and suitability of Christ Jesus to his bride. You will say, perhaps, that yours is a peculiar case. You think, probably, that any cross rather than the identical one which threatens to crush you, would appear to be more like one of God's choosing. This is a common opinion among Christ's fair, beloved ones. Nevertheless, when the blessed moment comes that the beautiful Bride shall be led forth, arrayed in all her splendours. it shall be seen that the chrysalis state can leave no tinge of corruption upon the glorious robe, in which she shall stand on that long expected and earnestly wished for day. But mark the blessedness! If we have a living desire after communion with Him, it is because we are already living in this very life, and are viewed by our God and Father in Christ, in the same beauty we shall then enjoy. What says the beloved John, when his soul was ravished with a view of the glory and dignity put upon the "fair ones" as they stand in Christ. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not YET appear what we SHALL be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is" (1 John iii. 2).

But to sum up all, the precious "MY love speaks plainly of dear relationship. My bride! "Thy maker is thy husband!" Thou art His temple, adorned with all his glory. Yes, whatever thou mayest feel of defilement, or see of uncomeliness in thyself, thou wilt not dare to say thy husband is anything but "all fair?" No. Then mark the blessedness; He has washed thee in His own blood. Thou, too, art "all fair! Thy death in self is swallowed up in His life, in which life thou art all fair. Thou art God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, and thus have "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

(Col. iii. 10.) Say, my brother, is His image all fair? But where is it? even Christ in you the hope of glory. Thus thou art fair within, and fair without, as you stand in Christ. The Lord help thee to listen to His own full testimony, as he beholds thee in thy new creatureship. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, [it is a loving father who speaks to thee as he admires thy beauty in Christ] and incline thine ear, [listen to me, and not to thy own unbelief, or to the artful suggestions of the accuser of the brethren forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; [thou hast no longer any thing to do with what thou had in Adam the first; thou bearest the image of the heavenly Adam now. He has redeemed thee, bought thee with his blood, he calls thee 'my love'; thou art not thy own, thou art bought with a price; He has married thee! He has won thy heart! He is jealous of thy love. Forget then all besides Himself.] so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him!"

Not only is the queen all fair, but "there is no spot in thee." Simply as she stands in Christ, and thus it is sweetly confirmed by Jehovah's own testimony,—"The king's daughter is ALL GLORIOUS WITHIN; her clothing is of wrought gold." Jehovah has said, "His delight is in her." He has called her His "peculiar treasure." What it is to be the peculiar treasure of Jehovah, who shall calculate? The word is full of unutterable glory; it signifies, "wealth, private property, which is laid up or reserved; precious, endeared, something exceedingly prized, and sedulously preserved." Now, all this, as applied by Jehovah to the Church, becomes too glorious for our poor minds to grasp; nevertheless, "All are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Now, dear brother, hast thou the true spiritual token, a living, spiritual, out and up-going of heart, like the ceaseless magnetic tendency of the needle, ever turning the thoughts, which roll over in thy blighted heart, in longing yearnings after rest in Jesus? The Lord help thee to settle down in the soul-establishing truth, that every "groaning which cannot be uttered" proves beyond a question, that "the Spirit of life" is there. And what follows? It also proves to thee that Jehovah hath laid his mighty hand upon thee, saying, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. But he cannot rest in anything short of perfection, therefore it proves that the words are spoken to thee as an answer to all that thou complainest of in thyself, and thy felt blackness. "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No. 1.)

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dev. Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places,"—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

WHERE art thou living, my brother, beloved in the Lord? What is thy resting place? Or art thou at sea this morning, tossed with tempests, and not comforted? A poor, frail, almost shipwrecked thing, feeling as though the next billow must break thee up, and hurl thee to destruction! The Lord open thine eyes to day, and help thee to look out of self, away from sin, death, and the devil, and all that belongs to time things, and temporal circumstances, and fix thy spiritual gaze upon thine eternal happiness, and thy all-glorious home.

Ah, say you, but am I truly one of the happy children of Zion? Can it be possible that one so vile is an Israelite indeed, in whom

there is no guile?

Well, it is good to "Walk about Zion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof, to mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces." It is only by comparing spiritual things with spiritual—by comparing the undoubted work of the Spirit in the souls of the redeemed, with what we know, by daily experience, to be going on in our own hearts, that we can arrive at right conclusions, with regard to our own pedegree, as to whether we are truly of the stock of spiritual Israel.

Some there are, we know, who scoff at such assayings; but while so much of tinseled death, in the shape of profession, turns up day by day around us, it will do the living child of God no harm to bring his little nugget of spiritual life to the fire again and again, to test it, to prove that it is genuine. It may receive the guinea stamp,

[The Gospel Cottage Lectures, No. 24.

and be a counterfeit after all; it is the gold that gives it value; the impression is but to cause it to pass current among men; it must fall into the hands of the Great Assayer at last, and His fire shall try every man's work! It is good then to go with Jacob to Bethel. With the prophet to the memorable moment, when he heard the voice of the Lord cry, Samuel, Samuel. With Paul to the gates of Damascus. With Nathaniel to the fig tree. With Zaccheus to the sycamore.

It is well to unlock again and again the strong room, and look over the old parchments, and to read our own name there, written in lines of blood!

If the Lord's Jeshuruns were created in Christ Jesus giants of full age at once, then, indeed, it might be allowable for one of these great ones to treat his fellow giant with scorn if he found him, like a little babe, asking childish questions, as to the reality of things. which cannot be comprehended until the spiritual understanding is fully developed by the attainment of such a growth in grace as brings a babe to the stature of a man in Christ. But since spiritually as well as naturally, however gigantic the after growth may be, each one must be born a babe, and grow up by degrees to maturity; and while it is well known that very many never come to maturity in this life at all, it is absurd to despise the day of small things; it is therefore well to stop often, and ask the question, " Am I an Israelite indeed?" Moreover, I add, however much heady and high-flying doctrinal professors may spurn such enquiries from them, our mercy stands unaltered thereby in the blessedness, that the ever precious Comforter in the one Church condescends to men of low estate; and delights as much to be the conveyer of milk to the new-born babes, as He does in testifying of a full Christ to the Father, who finds his consolation in partaking of the strong meat. Babes do not grow by harsh treatment, nor is it well to employ a hard-hearted scold as a nurse; but the sincere milk of the word flows best through a channel of love and tender-Blessed Paul gives us very simple instruction on this subject (1 Cor. ix. 22), "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak." If, however, a man has never himself been a babe in Christ, but has "climbed up some other way" into a profession. it is clear, he can have no true sympathy with a little helpless babe; it must, therefore, be expected from such, that they will be more inclined to whip than to sooth a poor little-faith, whose best evidence that it is truly alive is, that it is constantly full of needs. and as constantly crying for help.

Let us then first look at this Jeshurun. The beloved upright one! These Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile!

God put a word into Balaam's mouth, (Numb. xxiii. 5.) But God cannot lie; therefore what Balaam uttered by the Spirit must be true. How glorious is the testimony! "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Was this Israel after the flesh? It could not be; for Israel after the flesh was constantly rebelling against the Lord, and as constantly suffering from the crushing effects thereof. No; but it is in this Jeshurun—this little Israel beloved and upright—this Jeshurun whom He had chosen—that He looked upon with everlasting delight, and in whom He beheld no iniquity, in whom He saw no guile. It was these chosen ones in Christ Jesus that were Israelites indeed.

The Lord help thee to perceive, my brother, it was not Israel efter the flesh in whom the Lord saw no sin; but that INNER ISRAEL, of whom Paul speaks, who were in Christ Jesus. But what saith the answer of God unto Elias? "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." Even so, then, at this present time also, there is "a remnant according to the election of grace; and if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. xi. 4.) Again, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. ii. 28).

Now this account of God's true Israel applies to all the history of Israel as a nation, and it is a most important point ever to keep in view. Although Israel as a people formed a chosen and highly honoured nation, yet, at her best estate, the Israelites indeed were but a remnant of the whole, according to the election of grace. Each individual son of Jacob, who was reckoned in this remnant, like Paul, could, and would, ever delight to say, "By the grace of God I am what I am;" and could we have passed through the camp of Israel, when Balaam was compelled to pronounce Jehovah's blessing upon His people, we should have found the Lord's true Jeshuruns, scattered among the thousands of Jacob, just what his beloved upright ones are now—A POOE AND AN AFFLICTED PEOPLE! Many a spiritual Hannah bewailing her spiritual barrenness! Many a fearful Jacob saying, all these things are against me! Many a stripped and emptied Naomi, refusing to be called beautiful—" Call me not

Naomi, the beautiful—call me Mara, the bitter one, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me!" Many a robbed and chastened Job. sitting in the ashes of mourning and sorrow! Many a terrified David, hunted by the Devil, with some easily-besetting sin, as his blood hound, with which he tracks his footsteps, as the affrighted fugitive flys from his pursuer, crying, as he runs, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul," (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) Yes; and perhaps here and there a rebellious Jonah, who, after all the greatness of the mighty acts of the Lord had been manifested on his behalf, in bringing him up out of the "belly of hell;" yet, now, because a thing which came up in a night is taken away, tells the Lord, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." Oh, mystery of mysteries, that such base ingratitude should be found in the heart of a living child of God! Need we be surprised then, that a man feeling the working of such rebellion in his carnal mind, should question the possibility of his interest in Christ? Nay: but question it he must, if a living partaker of the Divine nature, until, by the ministry of the Holy Comforter, he is brought to understand the true state of the case—that it is ALL of grace. That the flesh profiteth nothing; that is, that the flesh remains "corruptstill according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22), and that since this "old man" cannot be changed, he is to be "put off"—flung aside as a leprous, filthy, and disgusting garment, day by day, yea, hour by hour. Such have been the Lord's Jeshuruns in all ages. Such are they still. Nevertheless, it is not all sorrow and melancholy. The "new man" which is "put on" has his moments of triumph! and then he can point to the inscription on his glorious. standard, which is ever floating, in all its divine beauty, over the battlements of our immortal strong-hold. "Ye are complete in Him."

The Lord help my brother to ponder this truth in his heart. It was not Israel after the flesh that God beheld when he declared he had not seen iniquity or perverseness in him; but it was that Israel—His own little Israel, beloved and upright—which Jeshurun signifies—which He beheld in Christ; and thou poor, troubled, child of God, if thou knowest the plague of thine heart, and art daily exercised by the fierceness of the warfare, which, until the wilderness journey is completed, must be thy lot; as at every step, with holy indignation, thou art putting off the "old man," dashing from thee, with fervent hatred, and with many an earnest, but bitter cry for deliverance, "the garments spotted by the flesh," as they cling about thee, and would cast thee down. Yes, thou too wert

included in that spotless company, who were declared to be the Lord's own Israel indeed, in whom there is no guile. But since it was not Israel after the flesh, of whom God spake, so it is not thyself after the flesh that now stands in unalterable perfection and eternal acceptance with God. But it is thyself, in thy new creatureship, born again from above, living in a pure and spotless life, God's workmanship in Christ Jesus; and all this blessedness flows to thee OF GRACE, not of works, lest any man should boast. Look, then at the matter in its simplicity. If it were of works, then, indeed, thou wouldest have cause for despair. But God, who is faithful, hath, of his own free and sovereign grace, given us ALL PERFEC-TION, even made us the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD in Christ. then, shall we look for this perfection? In our flesh? No: that is the old man, who is corrupt, and to be put off and hated! question arises then—do we hate ourselves? Yes, replies the anxious, seeking sinner; I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes, in bitterness and sorrow before God: for that I find, do all I can, I am utterly undone in myself! The Lord be praised. "The whole need not the physician but they that are sick." Thou art a " new creature" in Christ Jesus. Now mark the blessednesshenceforth thou art never called upon to look for any goodness in the "old man." He is crucified! He shall be hated! He shall be put off! for grace reigns. But if it were right to look for our perfection in the flesh, or the old man, could it be right to put him off? Is a progressive sanctification of the old man putting him off? Or is the flesh one thing, and the old man another, and the law of sin in the members another, and then, the body death another? Nay, but self, the flesh, the law of the body of death, and the "old man," are all so many names for that one abomination called SIN, which dwells in every child of God, and is felt and mourned over, hated and put off, only by those who have the life of God in their souls; for it is only in God's light we can see light, and whatsoever maketh manifest the deep abominations of the old man is this divine light.

How fearful then, must be the condition of a man who is crying peace, peace, in a habit of religion; whose best works are but gilded high treason against the God of Israel? Cheer up, my poor broken-hearted brother, who finds there is no discharge in the daily warfare between the old man and the new—between the flesh and the Spirit. Let professors boast about their habits of religion, and progressive sanctification. If the life of God in the new man is the main-spring of all, we are daily growing the GRACE, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord; and this

growing will bring about in us a very simple but very blessed habit. a HABIT OF FAITH! and the use of this habit shall sweetly bring us off, day by day, more than conquerors through him who hath loved us! But of what use is this most blessed habit if there is no warfare? for it is with the shield of faith we quench the fiery darts of the devil-and fearful, flaming, monstrous, things they are too. Nevertheless, the very fact that we are daily exposed to these darts, proves to us one thing, out of which we have reason to draw constant consolation —If we were dead in sin, wrapped up in the grave-clothes of a fleshly profession, Satan would not disturb. our peace. The reason the enemy disputes every step of our way is, because he has discovered the holy image of Jesus in us. he has discovered that the fear of the Lord has made us clean in our spiritual affections and tastes: and having influence upon the law of sin in our members, his very nature delights in the unceasing efforts to bring the soul into bondage to the law of sinwell knowing that nothing on earth is so terrible to a living child of God as sin, in any shape. This being the case, that malicious fiend is ever changing his tactics. He finds it is impossible for an Israelite indeed to live in open, outward sin; therefore he refines his temptations—sometimes as an accuser, charging with ingratitude and a thousand short-comings, then acting on the thoughts and imagination, calling up all kinds of evils, and instantly stepping in at the opposite door, saving, Ah! what, have I caught you indulging in such and such? How is it, if you are a child of God, you are not always with your conversation in heaven? Thus, and by a thousand other devices, some as black as himself, while others seem at first like beams from heaven, he is every moment watching to catch the feet of Jeshurun. What, however, does all this prove to us? Is it not that we are not of his house? For Satan is not divided against himself. If we were asleep in his religious toils, he would not be ever venting his rage and malice upon us.

But the question arises here-Why is he permitted thus to torment those in whom God delights? Is it not that we may be kept ever looking into Christ for our perfection, and not into ourselves? It is that we may be compelled to cease from our own works, and enter into rest by believing, and not by doing. It is that we may be driven away from self, and looking into the old man for anything to please or satisfy us—that we may find our all in Christ—that we may grow up into Him, and to the blessed discovery, that it is wholly as we stand in Him, the Lord Jehovah delights in us, and loves us, and has blessed us; so that, viewing things in this light,

we may go on singing

"That enemy can't boast of much, Who makes us watch and pray."

Indeed, I must confess, I would not change my little hope, surrounded as it is by hourly conflicts, with that of some of our placid, unruffled, progressively sanctified, self satisfied, professors, for ten thousand worlds.

Poor, tempest-tossed Jeshurun stands out, however, in matchless blessedness, purity, and glory, as he is found in Christ; therefore John says, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepsth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John v. 18). Now the Lord the Spirit sweetly open this truth in its simplicity, and we shall see. that although in his flesh dwelleth no good thing, yet as Jeshurun is born from above, as a new creature, he sinneth not; therefore, as a new creature, he is without guile. But why? Because we have here both head and members living in the same spotless life: and there is no schism in the body. If Christ speaks of his body. how does he express the union? "He that loveth his wife loveth himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." (Eph. v. 28.) Thus, then, stands the union between Christ and his body; the Church. in every member, is born from above in Him, and there can be no sin IN HIM. But that wicked one toucheth not a single member of Christ, as it lives in new creatureship in Him, as in Job's case. Satan has only power to touch that which the Lord's people have in the flesh, in the old man; he cannot touch their life, because "He that is begotten of God—and Christ is the only begotten of the Father-keepeth HIMSELF, and HIS CHURCH IS HIMSELF. Then flows out the full glory of the whole, " He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps;" and again, "I, Jehovah, do keep it: I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Thus Jehovah Jesus KEEPETH HIMSELF.

"His honour is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep;
All that his heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep."

Here, then, beloved Jeshurun, is thy glorious privilege—to be daily coming up out of self, and all the evils which thou art deploring in self, to the contemplation of thy perfection in Christ, "Kept by the mighty power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

How often have I had cause to rejoice in this glorious truth, when after hours of brooding over self, sin, and unworthiness, this

precious star has arisen and stood over Bethlehem! which has told me, that the Holy One in the manger, though there a babe in swaddling clothes, was the same mighty One who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers: that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in! and that thus I, a poor worm of the earth, in myself nothing; yet, as I stand in eternal union in Him. the great I AM! I live in Him; in a life so full of glory and blessedness, that all my little powers and narrow perceptions are utterly lost in the attempt to look over the dying boundary of time. that I may catch a momentary glimpse of it. It is so stupendous! So unutterably great and grand ! Paul gives us a hint respecting it thus-" I knew A MAN IN CHRIST. . . . How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful, [or possible], for a man to utter! Of such an one will I glory." But how did Paul get a renewed, blessed, apprehension of these glorious things? Was it by looking at himself as a sinner? No; but by faith looking at what he was in Christ.

Now the Lord help each anxious child of God, who may be daily questioning his interest in Christ; because of what he feels and knows of himself after the flesh, to stand with me by the side of the manger of Bethlehem. Contemplate that glorious babe !--Dare we for a moment measure His glory, majesty, power, wisdom, or mightiness, by what we can see of Him by the eye of sense? Nay; but faith steps in and whispers, "Unto us a Child is born. unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful! Counsellor! the mighty God! the everlasting Father! and the Prince of Peace!" Would it not be blasphemy to turn away and say, I see nothing but a helpless babe? Ask thyself the question—Is it not by the same rule dishonouring thy God, to be ever saying of thyself, according to what sense testifies of thy sinnership and nothingness in thyself, that thou canst see nothing but a reprobate? Is there not a conviction in thy heart that dead professors know nothing of those inward throes of spiritual life which cause thee to groan day by day? What says every pang of thy soul to thee? "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. The Lord help thee to live by faith and not by sight; for thou art truly his Jeshurun!

There is a glory and blessedness here we shall never fathom, but we must look at it again in next lecture.

Lord, increase our faith. Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No. 2.)

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

HAVING in last lecture looked at the people, spiritually, to whom these most precious words belong, we come now to observe the position in which they were placed when they were uttered by Moses the man of God.

Where were thev? Behold thou Jeshurun, the upright one, standing in the eternal uprightness, of our most glorious Christ! We have not to take our stand at mount Sinai! It is in the wildernes it is true; but blessed be our covenant God, we see to-day the fulfilment of that ancient prophecy, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose!" "Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempests, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words!" But, looking over and far beyond the little Jordan of death, we listen to the last words of Moses! no curse! no thunders now! no lightnings to terrify! It is no longer Moses at Sinai, but Moses at Pisgah! We have left the law as first given, shattered into a thousand fragments at the foot of the harning mountain, never to be gathered up and made whole again, but we bear with us now an unbroken covenant in the ark. even in the heart of our most blessed Mediator; who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; who has magnified the law on our behalf, and made it honourable. We stand to day in union with Him who is our own Head and surety, THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 25.

of whom we delight to learn, that, as He stood up in our law place to make his beloved members eternally secure—it was said of Him "The law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide," henceforth we take our stand on the heights of Pisgah, and listen to the sweet and gentle music of the silver trumpet of peace, as it breathes forth the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

And what are the first words which strike upon the listening ear? Who shall measure their fulness of blessedness! THE ETERNAL GOD IS THY REFUGE!

Beloved Jeshurun! What if thou art still "found in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness." What is that to thee? Can there arise a circumstance too terrible for thy God to manage? Though ten thousands of legions of devils pursue thee, and all the wild beasts of the forest threaten to devour thee, what does it all amount to? These are created things; the power which called them into being, not only controuls them all, but by a single word of his lips could as easily dash all into nothing again; Why art thou trembling then? If any power short of the Almighty was thy refuge, then indeed, cause might be found to fear it would fail, but it necessarily follows that eternal security belongs to the man whose refuge is the eternal God!

To plead unfitness, is only to plead your need of such a refuge, be that felt unfitness ever so great; but to feel this need proves that you are in the refuge, for no man out of Christ ever truly felt, his need of Christ. This point firmly fixed upon the heart will sweeten even bitter need, and open the precious simplicity of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

"The needy know, and only they, How precious is a refuge."

The saddest thing we have to lament in God's dear children is their slowness of heart to believe all that the Spirit has testified in the Holy Word of the blessedness of their security. Yet while it is most justly lamentable, even this is not without its peculiar working together, among the "all things," for good, like the unbelief of Thomas, although in itself evil, yet it made room for the sweetest manifestations of the compassion of Jesus towards his unbelieving Jeshurun's, and it gave Thomas such a confirmation of the reality of Christ's resurrection, that ever afterward he could contemplate, without a doubt or question, his God and Saviour, in his own very nature, and in his worship, adore him saying, "my Lord, and my God." Thus also, with the unbelief of the Lord people

now, sad as it is in itself, returning as it does again, and again, whenever the "clear shining" is obscured by clouds, or by having the curtain of night drawn over the scene, yet, its prevalence for any length of time drives the troubled soul into such a state of felt desperation at last, that like Jacob of old, they seize hold upon the Lord, and cry out "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Such confirmations of faith as are obtained at such times, however, are like the shields of mighty men laid up in the soul's armoury, which, although they tell of a fierce conflict, yet ever present a memorial of a victory, out of which we are not easily disputed.

Perhaps, however, the saddest feature of all connected with our unbelief is, that the felt existence of the very circumstances which render Christ so abundantly precious, is that which most of all tends to make us falter in our glad expressions of delight at having such a refuge. Yes, say some, but you cannot tell the greatness and depth of our abominations and felt pollutions. We do not need to measure them in any degree. The littleness or greatness has nothing whatever to do with the question. It is FELT! none feel but the LIVING! This is the only turning point. If you are born again, you shall see a little further on, where you are living. But now observe.

Under the law, there were certain cities set apart as cities of refuge, into which the manslayer was to run and be safe from all revengers of blood. Now, put the question to yourself, thou chief of sinners! Whatever thy sins may be, or have been! Was there any stipulation as to the number of deaths the man-slayer had caused? No. What if by some inadvertence, an accident on a large scale had occurred, so that thousands of men had perished by the want of foresight in a single person. What would you have said to such an one? Would you have called to him, stay man! the refuge is not for you, you have killed too many? No; but rather, if the man-slayer's friend, you would shout to him, Up man! Haste! haste to the refuge! fly! fly! thousands of revengers will be upon thee! The Lord help you to see that the case is like your own; the greater the number of pursuing sins, the greater the need and the blessedness of such a refuge!

Look then with joy and peace at your ever glorious refuge, the Lord help you to contemplate it in all its suitability, and blessedness.

The word rendered refuge in this place signifies a den, or cave in a rock, a place of safety, a dwelling place. Nor need we be in doubt where to find this precious spot. Moses had his eye and his heart

upon it when he spake. Well did he remember the glorious moment when in all its Gospel fulness it was pointed out to Him, even upon the mount of God. If the endeared knowledge of it caused his face to shine with Gospel glory then, the remembrance of it causes his heart to glow with Gospel joy now. Yes, He is testifying of that which he had seen and known. He is proclaiming that which was opened to him in the midst of one of the deepest scenes of soul distress into which the man of God had ever been plunged. And this should give us a lesson by the way. We shall only grow in a truly experimental knowledge of the glory and security of our Refuge, as we are caused to pass through the same crushing circumstances of need, and are brought to the same desperate extremity. as those through which Moses came, and that to which he was And it is here, the wonders of divine favour, and the tender loving-kindness of our covenant-keeping God stand out in all their unutterable and natchless grace and glory!

What must have been the astonishment of Moses, when he "returned to the Lord" (see Exod. xxxii.) in the depths of his soul agony—after having dashed the two tables of testimony, written with the finger of God, into a thousand fragments at the foot of the mount—to find that, instead of all this leading to ruin and destruction, it was the wonderful way, according to the inscrutable counsels of the Most High, which led direct out of all self-help and self-righteousness, into the full and most precious development of Almighty help! and an eternal righteousness! laid up for God's people in the person of their divine Mediator—This fiercest of the conflicts of Moses proved to be the opening to the high road to the refuge.

The climax of unutterable misery to which Moses was brought when he "returned unto the Lord" with his confession of his people's sin, is full of preciousness. He had descended from the mount as the deputed lawgiver; and by breaking the tables at the foot of the mount, he had pronounced a verdict full of unalterable curse and condemnation upon all who seek a refuge in the shattered fragments of that broken law. But now, he returns to the Lord, no longer in the capacity of lawgiver, but in a new office, as a mediator! to seek a better Refuge for poor fallen Jeshurun.

"Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin:—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

Moses here speaks with regard to himself personally. But Moses was both a prophet and a type. How preciously the truth swells out in all its fulness of glory, when, by faith, we meet a greater than Moses here!

I can never forget a season of unutterable blessedness, with which my gracious God favoured me, a few months ago, when reading in public this most precious verse in our evening lesson. It was at a time when my soul was bowed down within me allove measure, the enemy was thrusting sorely at me, and in the most palpable manner, standing at my right hand to resist me. Holding up my filthy garments and asking the question which he so well knows how to put and to press home, when he can divert the eye of a trembling Joshua (Zech. iii.,) and cause him to look at his own filthy garments, and brood over his own flinty heart, instead of keeping a steadfast gaze fixed upon his Refuge only—" What, you a minister of Christ? Do you not pollute that holy name by taking it upon your sinful lips? Do you not play the base hypocrite to talk about trusting him, loving him, worshiping him, and praising him, with your heart as hard as a stone, and your affections as cold as a Lapland winter?" Indeed! indeed! it is no enviable position to travel thus, "bound unto Jerusalem." However, this was my case on that memorable evening, and thus was I dragging my heavy heart along through the thirty-second chapter of Exodus, until I reached the 32nd verse. What a change! what a glory! what a soul-dissolving view of my most glorious Christ! I saw Him, in all the tender love of his heart! in all the fulness of his divine grace! and in all the glory of his royal Person! standing up as MY REFUGE-my Advocate-my eternal God! saying on MY behalf "yet now, if thou wilt forgive his sin:"-look my brother into your Bible, observe how it is pointed here. That dash spoke volumes of blessedness into my inmost soul. My glorious Mediator seemed to be engulphed in his own tender emotions of compassion. love, and zeal, so as to cause him to pause, that he might seek for a resolve! and what a resolve! who shall comprehend its fulness of mercy and of grace! The holy Comforter write it upon thy blighted heart, beloved little faith !—" AND IF NOT, BLOT ME, I PRAY THEE, OUT OF THY BOOK WHICH THOU HAST WRITTEN." Yes, I believed it with all the sweet assurance of a sinner saved, that I, personally as a member of the body of my most glorious Christ, was so dear to Him, that, great as the mighty fact appears, rather than be eternally separated from one—the meanest—of his members which are written with Himself in the book of life, he would claim to have his own name blotted out for ever! "Father I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." He is the eternal God

thy Refuge! Listen to Him my brother, "my counsel shall stand, I will do all my pleasure." Yes, what a change! now, instead of desiring to hide myself, for very shame on account of my barrenness, from the gaze of the people, I fain would have sought a place to

"Weep to the praise of the mercy I found!"

It is by openings of communion like this, that we come to that sweet knowledge of a precious Jesus, so earnestly besought on behalf of the Church at Ephe.us, "That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of god."

"Love moved Him to die,
On this I rely,
My Saviour hath loved me, I cannot tell why;
But this I can find,
We two are so joined,
He'll not be in glory and Teave me behind!"

I have mentioned this circumstance here, as forming one of the many instances which are more or less common in the experiences of God's living children; as setting forth, in some measure, the unexpected and sudden way in which, in the hours of deepest need "the eternal God" manifests himself as our refuge. Moses pleaded, but at first the Lord dealt with him somewhat as He did with the Syrophenician woman, (Matt. xv. 23,) of whom it is said, that at first, "He answered her not a word." Still, although put off-and bitter was his suspense-Moses urges his plea, " If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." And now mark the divine boldness that the Lord puts into the souls of his living ones by a sweet soft answer of peace. No sooner had the Lord told Moses, "I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken, for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name," than he raises his plea to the highest pitch of holy boldness! "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." What a mighty change was here! such is the power of one of God's precious words "fitly spoken." It expands the heart in a moment, the forlorn and forsaken one arises out of the ashes of slavish fear and dread, and with the simple confidence of a princely child at home, walks at his ease through the royal halls of his father, and with all freedom from terror, asks large gifts at his hands.

It was by these wonderful steps that Moses was introduced to a full and Gospel knowledge of his Refuge. And the Lord's children

find the same process followed still. Let none therefore be cast

down, although the promise be long delayed.

How glorious is the Refuge! well may the face of Moses shine, "And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock!" (Exod. xxxiii. 21.)

Here we have the eternal God our Refuge set forth under three several titles, each one pointing to our most glorious Christ, the

Everlasting, Ever-blessed. Covenant Refuge of his people.

We find the first title of our Refuge set forth in all the eternity of his glorious Mediatorship, in the eight chapter of Proverbs, "I was set up from everlasting when he prepared the heavens, I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the depths; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then, I was by HIM, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." This is our eternal PLACE of refuge, PLACE of security, PLACE of everlasting blessedness and peace: and it has ever been the delight of the Father thus to testify through the Spirit to every living desiring Jeshurun that He has such a place by Him, eternally provided as a refuge for the poor. Who shall estimate the overflowings of joy which filled the heart of Moses, when he was brought up to the sensible apprehension and realization of his immutable standing in this MOST HOLY PLACE! More especially so because, being thus refuged in Him, it followed that all sin, condemnation, bondage, and death, was for ever cast out, and excluded: what ever may have happened or shall come to pass, outside the refuge, could not affect the perfection and blessedness of "a man in Christ," for in Him, in every sense of the word, is no sin! It is a holy refuge, and every child of God who is refuged in Him, must be and is, holy even as he is holy. crowning mercy of all is, however, to be found in the soul-establishing truth, that whatever our feelings may be, respecting our own sinnership, and however little we may enjoy our refuge here. it alters nothing of our holiness in Him on the one hand, or of our security in Him on the other: a sweet knowledge of this is the strong hold of faith.

> "Once in Him in Him for ever, Thus the eternal cov'nant stands."

Furthermore, we have this precious truth confirmed to us in the

second title given to our Refuge. "He is a Rock!" but what a rock! He is the Rock of eternity! the Rock of Ages! and thus stands the Lord's command to thee my wavering brother, whatever lights and shades may chequer thy pathway, and it is thy privilege to know that the more thy needs cry, the louder does the voice of the Comforter call upon thee, saying "Trust ye the Lord FOR EVER: for in the Lord Jehovah is the everlasting Rock!" or the Rock of Ages, (Isa. xxvi. 4.) David says "trust in the Lord AT ALL TIMES ye people." High or low, standing or falling, light or dark; happy or miserable; in health or sickness; prosperity or adversity; life or death. But the prophet goes beyond the Psalmist. He embraces the whole trust in one endless circle; FOR FYFR! times of all kinds will soon close in upon us, but eternity comprises all. If we are new creatures in Christ, we are now living in eternal life in Him; therefore, nothing short of the everlasting Rock will serve as our refuge. A sweet knowledge of the refuge thus, caused David while standing by faith firmly upon this Rock to sing "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth [eternal praises to the Lord for a knowledge of our total failure in self! but God is the ROCK (margin) of my heart and my portion for ever!" (Psal. lxxiii. 26).

Finally, the third title given to our refuge is the CLIFT OF THE ROCK, which signifies the place dug in the rock, or the smitten place in the rock, which closes up the full character of our ever blessed Refuge. In the first title which the Lord gives our Refuge, namely. THE PLACE BY HIM, may point to Christ the eternal God our Refuge, in all his covenant relations, engagements, and fulness of all grace, as he stood up the Head of his body the Church. The second title, THE ROCK OF AGES, exhibits to faith the glorious holy Person of our Refuge Immanuel God with us. The eternal God in our own nature. The mighty God, and yet our brother born expressly for adversity. Upon this Rock Jesus is now building his Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail to prevent the headstone being brought forth with shoutings. Yes, dear little faith. you and I shall be there, after all our little conflicts, to sing grace. grace, unto it." Then to make all secure, that ever-living Stone may be cemented to the foundation with blood! the rock is smitten of God and afflicted! He hath put Him to grief! that Jeshurun may find his secure refuge in the bleeding CLIFT of that eternal Rock! But our limits compel us to pause. The Lord grant, that we may gather up a few honey drops from the Rock in next lecture.

"Remember my bonds. Grace be with you." Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No. 3.)

The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall devel in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shall tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood,
I rom thy riven side which flowed!
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

WE hastily closed last lecture while looking at the three blessed titles, by which Jehovah revealed the Refuge of Jeshurun to Moses the man of God (Exod. xxxiii. 21), in answer to that plea of his, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory." And "Christ is All." He was the covenant Place for refuge; the eternal Rock of Refuge; and his divine sufferings and blood, death and resurrection, have opened and provided an everlasting refuge—A clift of the rock—in which little-faith may now both rest and nestle in present security, and hereafter in eternal consolation and joy.

This most precious consideration of our refuge, opens to us the greatness and supreme glory of the subject, "The eternal God is thy Refuge." But since Christ is our only Refuge, then Christ is the eternal God! Here the mystery opens to faith, as it is written, "I and my Father are one!" Where is beloved Jeshurun, the upright? "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no power, death, sin, or devil is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one!" This is our Refuge, "The Father Himself loveth you" (John xvi. 27); and an everlasting love has a strong hand! What security! Not only in the hand of Christ, but in the hand of the Father too!

But now let us glance for a moment at that which we are to un-[The Gospel Cottage Lecturer, No. 26.] derstand by this glorious hand. It is the refuge of Jeshurun! And it is that which makes the refuge secure! It signifies properly the almighty POWER of Jehovah. But where is this power manifested? Even in the Person of our most glorious Christ, and this is the glory of Jeshurun! for, whatever Christ is in the infinity of his power, as "the mighty God," He is all that, expressly by Jehovah's covenant engagements, gift, oath, anointing, and eternal purpose, to, and for the Church. As the second person in the ever-blessed Trinity, while in oneness of essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost, yet He, as the mighty God of Jacob, Immanuel, God with us, our most glorious Mediator our Refuge, stands, and ever has stood in covenant, yet in real life-union with his body!

"One glorious Head, one body there," &c.,

Hence arises the glory of Jeshurun's refuge. Our living spiritual union to Christ, by which, before time began, we had a spiritual life, being in the Person of Christ—how, we cannot now understand, nor is it for us to enquire—and the essence union which has eternally existed between the persons in the glorious Trinity! This brings up every feeble member of the body of Christ-although that member be now but just beginning to breathe the breath of spiritual life. in faint and languid desires after pardon and peace through the blood of the Lamb-into personal, and unutterably blessed union with God the Father Himself, as it is written, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John xvii. 23). The Lord help thee, my dear brother, while thou art daily and hourly, yea, perhaps at this moment, more so than thou hast ever felt it before. discovering thine own utter emptiness and nothingness, folly and worthlessness—for it must be so at every step through the wilderness. according to John's testimony, "He must increase, I must decrease." The Lord help thee to cast anchor here! Immanuel, one with thee in nature, one with thee in eternal covenant life-union; one in nature also with the Father, in the eternity, infinity, almighty power, and all that belongs to the Godhead; bound by eternal relationship. and by eternal infinite unalterable love to the Father on the one hand, and bound to thyself, trembling little-faith, as the dearest object of his infinite, eternal, unchangeable love on the other, as to his only bride, the beloved of his heart, the apple of his eye!

Here is thy refuge, thy blessedness, thy glory, thy unsearchable security! Thou art thus so completely one with Christ, that in loving Christ, the Holy Father loves thee; and not only so, thy oneness is of that nature, that in loving Himself. Christ loves thee. "And no

man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Eph. v. 29.)

But what has all this to do with the HAND of Jehovah? It is the very fulness of the precious subject in all its simplicity and glory. Christ said to the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for HE WROTE OF ME" (John v. 46). Yes, let the wise and prudent say what they may in contradiction to the testimony borne by Christ, still, as the Spirit of God shall shine upon those wonderful pages of history, there we shall discover, in every circumstance, a sweet and precious type of Christ and his Church, connected with a glorious promise made to the Lord's Jeshurun in Christ. Thus we find in the third verse of this 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy, the Spirit testifying of Christ and his Church in these memorable words, "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in THY HANDS." Now it is quite clear they cannot be in two places at one and the same time, and they have never been out of Christ. God the Father has ever loved them and accepted them and blessed them IN CHRIST. Therefore Christ personally is this mighty hand! as Paul, by the Spirit also testifies, that to all who believe He is Christ the power of God.

My brother, the Lord the Spirit bring up every thought of your noble mind, into sweet captivity to the obedience of Christ, and lead out your soul in its renewed apprehensions of spiritual realities " to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," that you may be brought out of all fleshly systems of f men's devising about God's moral government, and a thousand other more speculations, in what is called, theology; to the precious soulcomforting knowledge of the glory of God as manifested, where alone it can be found, in the Person and fulness of our most glorious Christ. It will then be thy priviledge in looking over the holy word, to discover Christ everywhere. Wherever there is manifested the presence, the power, the wisdom of Jehovah, there it shall be seen to be in the Person of Christ. Not Christ without the Father; that could not be; but the Father in Christ. Whether we travel back to the laying of the foundations of the earth, or to the spreading forth the firmament, and planting it with the marvellous tokens of the majesty of his all-creating, all-sustaining, all-controlling power; or whether we walk in the garden of Paradise, or with Enoch as he walked with God; or whether we watch the swelling of the flood of waters, or sit down and gaze upon his covenant bow; or whether we stand with Abraham and listen to the promise, or walk with the man of faith, up the mountain to the sacrifice of his only Isaac; or whether we watch with Jacob at the ladder of Bethel, or stand by and count the odds in the conflict at Peniel; or whether we turn saids

and behold Joseph sold by his brethren, or weep with him as his heart yearns over his afflicted brother Benjamin, in the noble halls of Pharaoh: or whether we bow to the earth in holy reverence that we may unbind the sandals of carnal reason, and stand with Moses at the bush, or with the loins girt and our staff in our hand we eat the Passover on our last night in Egypt, with departing Israel; or whether we admire with adoring wonder, the divided sea, and the pillar of cloud, or stand on the heights with Moses in his triumphs and sing, "The Lord is a Man-of-war, Jehovah is his name, . . . Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is become glorious in power! THY RIGHT HAND, O Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy!" Or whether we go forth with Miriam in the dance, and join in her triumphal chorus, "Sing ye to Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea!" and so, whether it be step by step onward through the wilderness journeyings, or still onward through lines of judges, priests, and kings: tabernacles, temples, and thrones, at every fresh opening in history. at every fresh ordering of types, faith delights to stand and gaze upon, and hold sweet fellowship with the same divine Person, The anointed of Jehovah, the man of Jehovah's right hand (Psal. lxxx. 17), in whom it hath pleased the Father that ALL FULNESS shall And as faith gazes, how precious! while surrounded with all the grandeur of God! to hear the tender voice of the divine

There is something most glorious in the words spoken by Jehovah to Moses the man of God, respecting the Refuge, in connection with that to which we have already referred (Exod. xxxii. 22.) nothing could be more blessedly suitable to the condition of Moses as he then stood up before Jehovah, as the representation of poor fallen guilty Jeshurun! nothing could tend more to inspire him with child-like confidence, or to fill his heart with joy and peace. But my brother, the Lord help thee to see, that thyself as one of the Lord's Jeshurun's wert as truly interested in the gracious words as Moses himself. It is a simple statement of thy true condition as a child of God from day to day.

Comforter whispering in the soul, "This is thy friend!" This eter-

nal God is THY Refuge!

It describes the mode of thy dwelling in thine eternal dwellingplace, thy Rock of Refuge, in unchangeable completeness, beauty and perfection, in Christ. Washed in his precious blood, and living in his eternal life, both of which flowed forth and rolled down over every—even the feeblest—members of his body, when, as the Rock of Ages, lie was smitten to death that his Jeshurun might live! when that clift was opened in his sacred heart, whence, "forthwith came thereout blood and water!" Eternal cleansing, and eternal life, for Jeshurun! What a baptism! every member was then indeed baptized into his death, each member might likewise rise again in resurrection blessedness, in eternal life and spotless perfection. Yes, beloved little-faith, how far above all thy little lights and shades of ever-changing feeling in sensible experience art thou raised, as thou, in thy true life and blessedness, are at all times living in that eternal life which became thine own personal property at the resurrection of Jesus. Laid up for thee in the Person of Christ, to be given out—or to come forth, and take up its abode in thy little tabernacle, when thy time of love was come in which thou shouldest be gathered up, by spiritual regeneration, into visible life union with thy glorious Head.

Now, the holy Comforter lead out thy spiritual mind to-day in sweet contemplation on this most glorious circumstance in connection with thine eternal Refuge! according as it is written, "but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly blessedness and perfection in Christ Jesus;" now this was done at the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And then follows the divinely glorious purpose for the accomplishment of which this blessedness was wrought out for the Church "that in the ages to come, he might show the EXCEEDING riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."

What does it all mean? Go to Moses, the man of God; ask him what he understood that love act of Jehovah's to typify, which he has handed down to us in the following memorable words. " And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen." (Exod. xxxiii. 22, 23.) We have seen already that the "PLACE BY " Jehovah is no less than the Covenant Person of our most glorious Christ—the Wisdom of God in a mystery—set up from everlasting as the head of his body the Church. The Rock of eternal Ages, upon which the Church stands in untouchable security, is no other than the visible Person of Immanuel, God with us. God and man one glorious Jesus Christ. The clift in that Rock, the suffering, blood shedding, and death of the same glorious Immanuel, in which Jeshurun finds his abiding security and refuge. But it does not stop here. Thus far, in these three points of precious testimony, we have set before us, first, the eternal love of the Father manifested in the choice of the Churchin Christ, in covenant before time. Secondly, the equally blessed and personal love of the Son in becoming our Rock, by taking our very nature into eternal union with himself, in his divine Person, according to covenant engagements, in the fulness of time; and thirdly the unparalleled love of the Father in giving and then smiting his only begotten and well-beloved Son, and of the ever adorable Son of God in bowing his sacred head to meet the dreadful stroke, that thereby the redemption of his body might be sure. Here stands Jeshurun's pardon and eternal deliverance from all sin, curse, condemnation, and death. Whatever may have been the sum-total of his mighty debt, he beholds it paid in full in the clift of the Rock. But another step is necessary to complete the great design, and render the Refuge of Jeshurun his eternal hme, and his eternal glory. His justification and final exaltation must make his royal Refuge complete. We have already seen that Christ personally is the right-hand of Jehovah-" Christ the power of God." Now there are two expressions in the testimony of the Holy Ghost by Moses, in the verses quoted above, which, as the fulfilment of the same in type, made the face of Moses to shine; so the apprehension of the same by faith should cause the heart of Jeshnrun still to go forth in the dances of them who make merry now. The spiritual scene takes in eternity past-all time-and eteruity to come. But the grand centre is to be found in that moment spoken of thus—" While I pass by," and when in its fulness did this transpire? Was it not when Jehovah passed by in all the glory of his righteous majesty, while our Surety hung bleeding upon the tree? O mysterious love! It was then Jehovah covered Jeshurun with his hand, even with Christ himself! Who shall reckon up the glorious sum of gratitude due to the eternal God our Refuge? Well may Moses exclaim in the full glow of the precious remembrance of this solemn scene, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

The expression rendered here "I will cover thee with my hand," seems to contain a sweet intimation of precious union, "I will interweave thee like a net work or plaited fence work in the hollow of my hand." How blessed the truth! put into Christ, woven into all He is, one with Him in all He has. Hidden in him from the storm of wrath, while it beat upon his sacred head, as He stood forth crowned with thy thorns, oh happy Jeshurun, that thou mayest be for ever crowned with his glory !

Is it not thus, that all his saints are in his hand? Is it not thus,

that Jeshurun is now, and shall be for ever secure in his Refuge? Is it not thus, we are to contemplate the full flowing of the ever glorious testimony "none shall snatch thee out of my hand!" But mark one sweet feature more.

While Jeshurun was thus covered from all wrath and condemnation in Christ, the great battle was fought, the glorious victory won! still another step must bring him up to the full and complete enjoyment of all that is treasured up for him in the mighty right hand of Jehovah! the eternal God his Refuge! What is this, but the resurrection of Christ? "I will take away" or DRAW BACK my hand, "and thou shalt see my back parts," or all that remains in after manifestations of my covenant purpose and love in Christ Jesus. Where is all this beheld? Is it not in the risen, ascended, exalted Refuge of Jeshurun? And by his resurrection, we, being by living and blessed union, one with Him, stand eternally justified. And by his ascension and exaltation—all our affairs, our persons, and our needs, both for time and for eternity, being so intimately interwoven with and in Him-our eternal acceptance and complete glorification has become a matter as secure to us, if among the Lord's favoured Jeshuruns, as the very being and existence of the eternal God.

Thus Moses the man of God, in life, and at death, delighted to contemplate the eternal God our Refuge! and I may venture to confess that the precious subject lifts up my heart in holy aspirations after fuller and more blessed openings of all that remains to be developed in that precious covenant ordered in all things and sure.

I cannot refrain from adding one precious testimony of the Spirit's dropped from the pen of Peter, in confirmation of this soulelevating subject. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath BEGOTTEN US AGAIN TO A LIVELY HOPE BY the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Who were begotten again? Those who had been known before by God the Father in Christ; but who, although they never could fall out of Christ, had fallen into death in Adam earthy, but were now brought up, in the same nature in which they fell, out of death into eternal life and glory in the Person of Christ, and thus begotten again, they are brought forth in new-creatureship in generation now: that they, member after member, rise in newness of life and take their appointed place in that glorious body which is fast growing into that perfect temple which shall ever shine forth in unutterable beauty and splendours to the eternal praise and glory of Jehovah's grace.

Could it be otherwise, than, that Moses when brought to Pisgah. should look back to the clift of the Rock, where all that was glorious in the name of Jehovah was proclaimed to Him? Where he had had unfolded to his adoring faith, Jehovah Jesus! the eternal God! Jeshurun's only Refuge. "MFRCIFUL!" Jeshurun! where are thy daily needs of mercy? Behold thy Refuge! infinitely bountiful! Infinitely full of mercy! What canst thou desire more? But mark one most precious thought. Since thy Refuge is full of mercy towards thee, whatever of anger against thy sins may have filled the heart of thine eternal God once, all that wrath must have been poured out before his heart could be filled with mercy! where then was it poured out? Dost thou earnestly desire to see the full discharge of all wrath against thy sins? so that thou mayest be sure that the eternal God is THY Refuge, and that He is full of mercy to thee? Go to thy Refuge! Ask Him to do by thee as he did by the disciples of old "and he showed them his hands and his feet" "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfieth the desire of every Living Jeshurun!" (Psal. cxlv. 16.)

But now, behold beloved little-faith, the fulness of all other needed provision which thy Refuge contains for thee, and thou canst not find a spiritual requirement—nay, nor a providential one either—that shall outmatch the mighty fulness! Why? listen to the Spirit's testimony "It hath pleased the Father that in Him should ALL FULNESS dwell," and again, "for in Him dwelleth ALL THD FULNESS of the Godhead bodily! and ye are complete in Him (Col. ii. 9.) Dost thou feel the LUAVEN OF LIFE working in thy little faith, thy little hope, thy little spark of love, causing thee to break forth "oh that I knew where I might find Him?" Fear not beloved Jeshurun "all are your's, ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The Lord help thee to turn one more sweet confiding look upon thy Refuge! He is full of mercy, full of grace, full of long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for the thousands of Jeshurun!

"Fear not little flock! it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

What think ye of Christ? Our glorious exalted Christ! our ever living, ever loving Christ! the eternal God our Refuge? Jesus, the same yesterday! to-day! for ever! full of grace and truth.

Here we must close our feeble thoughts upon the first item in the glories of Jeshurun—his Refuge! and the Lord helping, we purpose seeking after thee, dear little-faith, as safely folded in "the everlasting arms" in next lecture.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No. 4.)

"The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

Where property is concerned, a good title to the right of possession is of very great value. There is however, that which far transcends

a good title, namely, the secure possession of the property.

Many a man has the most unquestionable title to property, possession of which he can never obtain; while many possess and hold by the most perfect right, yet are not able to retain; they find do what they may to make it sure, it will take to itself wings and fly away. They devise all kinds of schemes, but instead of security or increase, they produce nothing but desolation and waste.

And because, so uncertain are things temporal,—although in these, nothing happens by chance—men conclude that things eternal are to be calculated upon by the same precarious rule. But what a libel is this! first upon the wisdom of God, and secondly upon his Word. His glory is at stake, therefore his infinite wisdom must have arranged all for the accomplishment of the purposes on which his glory is dependent, and his infinite power equally stands engaged to perform all that he has said shall be accomplished in bringing about the completion of those purposes.

It follows then, that wherever a good title can be made out, there can be no uncertainty as to ultimate possession and enjoyment in things spiritual. Indeed the whole Word of God is one continued revelation of this grand truth, that however time things may fluctuate and vary, eternal things rest upon a base which nothing can alter or cause to fail. The Spirit of God has exhausted the human vocabulary, and called in every grand figure that nature presents, to set forth, not only the immutability of the title, but also of the eternal security that is provided in Christ Jesus concerning these

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 27.

things which make for our everlasting joy, peace, and glory. What then is our priviledge? Is it not to be be daily coming up out of self and its changes, leaning upon the testimony of the Spirit concerning Christ, and honouring our God with our little substance? And faith is the substance of things hoped for.

But, my brother! Why that down cast look, and that bitter sigh this morning? You are not sure about your title? You can see the security of Jeshurun, and much of the glory that awaits him too; but you feel it is a solemn personal matter, and you want to "Read your title clear?"

And where wouldst thou read it? Oh, say you, in a little more faith, so that I might be able to lay hold, and keep a firm grasp upon the precious promises, as they are laid up in the Person of Christ. Is this thy true feeling my brother? Pause a moment! I will show thee thy protrait in one whose title thou canst not question.

On a certain day "one of the multitude" being in desperate need. having sought help of man, yea, even of the Lord's disciples, but in vain; at last appealed thus unto Jesus. "But if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us." Immediately Jesus, taking up the poor trembler's words said unto him. " If theu canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.". Now mark, how exactly like thyself was this poor man. Christ said nothing about the QUANTITY of his faith, yet, he instantly goes to work, with his carnal reason, weighing his little ounce of faith against his ponderous ton-weight of unbelief! But what had his reason or his unbelief to do with the matter? What though he had but a single grain of faith? There it was. A grain of wheat; because it lies hidden in a sack full of chaff, is in no way injured thereby. It may be difficult to find it, nevertheless, he who put it there, does not go by what we can see of it, but by his own personal knowledge that there it is. The little spark which has been dropped into the flax may long smoulder, and may seem just ready to die out; but while a single curl of smoke is seen to rise from it, he who stands by with his fan, knows it is not quenched.

How precious is the Gospel! Christ does not say. Come all ye who are strong in faith and can run and fight with vigour, and I will receive you. Oh no, But he stoops into the very dust, and whispers in the ear of the fainting, overwhelmed, and fallen one, "Come unto me all ye that labour [to believe] and are heavy laden [with fear and sin, but especially with that bane to all our peace and comfort, unbelief]; and I will give you rest." What was it drew this

poor doubting one to Christ. The fame of Jesus attracts him; the pressure of his need impelled him; but it was the secret power of the Spirit, whispering to the inner man which drew him by an invincible constraint; the precious "Come unto me," spoken by Christ through the Spirit in the heart, like the dropping of oil upon the wick of the exhausted lamp, just keeps the little flickering flame alive until it reaches the full reservoir of golden oil: "of whose fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace." In this dear man we have a most precious comment upon those words, "Work out your own salvation with fear [although it be in the midst of fear], and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12.)

But now mark the simplicity of the man's reply. And tell me my brother, if the same words were spoken to thee under similar circumstances wouldest thou not be compelled to make just the same answer? The poor man does not qualify his statement by saving WHAT he believed or HOW FAR he believed. Christ had not set up any standard. No. He did not say, If thou canst believe that thou art a believer all things are possible. No. It is "ONLY BELIEVER!" And who shall say what a simple act this "ouly believer" is. as it is put forth by a new creature in Christ Jesus? Paul believed in the Lord Jesus Christ long before he could say, "I know in whom I have believed." He believed in him with a true and living faith, wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, the moment he heard the astonishing words, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." But did he then believe that he was an eternally redeemed believer in Christ? No. He had got faith, but knowledge had to follow. before he was brought up to the full assurance of faith. And thoroughly well did Paul know the blessedness of this spiritual knowledge of Christ, therefore he says "Yea, doubtless, and I count ALL THINGS but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. iii. 8.) Here then is the mistake so commonly made by little-faith in looking after Jeshurun's precious title in his own experience. The little desiring babe embarassed himself by mixing up faith and knowledge together; whereas, they stand as distinct, the one from the other, as the power which a living eye has of seeing objects, is distinct from the light in which the object Knowledge is good, but faith is better. Knowledge can understand the strength, and the affection of him in whose arms she reposes; but faith, like the new born babe, clings by a LIVING SPI-RITUAL INSTINCT to the bosom which nourishes, warms, comforts, and affords it soft repose.

What, and how much did this poor trembling man believe? Who shall answer the question? Yet the issue proves that he had that true faith of which Christ spake, for he obtained the desired blessing. We may gather, however, from his reply to Jesus, what his own view of the case was. The words of Christ "If thou canst believe," entered with such life and power into the man's soul, and produced such a strength of spiritual emotion; such an INWARD WORKING UP of the Spirit of life that he wept. Do you know the holy feeling my brother? it is of more value than all the deep knowledge, and shining gifts in the world! I confess to you, I am hourly longing after a renewal of this sweet spiritual impulse, thus given to my little faith, more than after any other thing that even God himself can bestow upon me in time; excepting, that final blessedness, when I shall see Him as He is! But the soul dissolving revival arises only from those holy communications made to faith by the divine Comforter, when He sweetly glorifies Christ; as it is written, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John xvi. 14.)

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, LORD, I BELIEVE; help thou mine unbelief." (Mark ix. 24.) I know of no word recorded for the encouragement of the Lord's seeking family more sweetly full of instruction than this simple account of this man's answer. The Lord help thee my brother to lay aside thy too scrupulously doubtful enquiries of about what it is you believe, or how much you believe, and to come with the simple plea, suggested by thy felt need of more grace, saying, "Help thou mine unbelief."

My more advanced readers, if any such take the trouble to look over my humble pages, must forgive me if I spend some time in attempts at clearing up the doubts and difficulties, which many years of painful suspense, have taught me, to look for among the lambs of the Lord's fold. Indeed, I confess myself unable to speak long upon those great and glorious truths, which form the grand centre of all that is worth a thought either in time or eternity, without stopping to cheer on my fearful companions; by seeking to show them, that incomparably glorious as are Jeshurun's royal estates and immunities, Jeshurun himself is to be looked for among those who seem to feel in themselves that they are the last in the world who dare boldly put in their claim. And yet there are seasons even with these, when the fire of divine love kindles up so sweetly in their tabernacles for a few moments, that who so bold as they! But alas! although it is the sure effect of true love, the moment

the flame subsides and the fire dims again, they become alarmed lest they have made too free.

But now, turning from these matters concerning the TITLE. Let us again gaze upon the unalterable SECURITY, both of the persons of the heirs, and also of the inheritance which our glorious elder Brother is now holding on our behalf.

In like manner, as the Refuge, of which we have said much, supposed the necessity for such a refuge, and the greatness and extent of that refuge supposed the greatness and extent of the Jeshuruns need of it: so, the "Everlasting arms" in their infinite capacity, suppose a corresponding necessity for the putting forth of their almighty powers, to exist in the circumstances of "little Israel, the beloved and the upright." Therefore the Lord fix it as a divine maxim on thy heart, my beloved brother, that as thy needs cannot extend beyond the infinite, and as infinite provision is contained in the everlasting arms, for all the needs thou canst be the subject of—The energy of the Spirit, to bring thee to a knowledge of Christ, and to work faith in thy heart to believe in Him, being included—it is utterly impossible thou canst fail.

"Underneath are the everlasting arms." Who shall in any degree estimate the blessedness that belongs to that favoured one who is eternally folded up in the omnipotent arms of Jehovah! yet nothing short of the realization by faith of this precious truth, can make a sinner convinced of what he is in himself, and what is eternally due to him as a sinner, happy for a moment.

The arms are spoken of in the plural, therefore, may refer to many glorious branches of the economy of our salvation, yet each must lead us direct to the person and fulness of Christ.

I propose to look at three pairs of these eternal arms which will probably embrace most or all of the others which might be named.

The two foundation arms in which all the glories of Jeshurun are folded up in untouchable security, and invested with a blessedness which no capacity short of the infinite, can measure or comprehend, are first "The everlasting covenant," (Heb. xiii. 20, and 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) founded in the second, namely, "The eternal power and Godhead" of our most glorious Christ. These form "the deep that coucheth beneath!" (Deut. xxxiii. 13.)

Next to these follow, the two active and all fulfilling arms, the first of which plucked poor Jeshurun as a brand from the burning, and the second sat him down in eternal, untarnishable perfection and beauty in never ending friendship with justice and judgment which are the habitation of the throne of glory! The first is "ETERNAL RE-

DEMPTION," the second "EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS," raised up by the first Jeshurun, henceforth knows but of one remaining debt, and that out of a full heart, he will delight to be ever paying; and yet, as much delight, that the more he pays, yet still the more he owes, for his debt of love he must for ever owe! Established by the second, he views himself upheld in radiant splendours which make the sun look dim, and which enable him to sit complacently and hear himself proclaimed before admiring seraphs, the spotless jewel which adorns the Royal diadem in Jehovah's hand! (Isa. ixii. 3,) Yes, these are mysteries great and wonderful! but Jeshurun is the royal family of God, the Bride of Jesus! and such a parentage, and such relationship, must carry with it a dowry, worthy of the giver, and worthy of the noble place to which the beloved and chosen one is exalted at the right hand of the majesty on high.

But then, to crown the whole! two other arms remain. first all matchless in its wonders and its power! splendours may dazzle, yet be cold! but this, like a deep ever-flowing river of potent all-dissolving fire, yet soft and tender in its sweet embraces, like the first overflowings of a mother's gushing sympathy upon her weeping new-born babe; still infinitely more tender! Oh Jeshurun! in the midst of all thy childish wandering, and the vanity of thine ever changing mind, behold thy blessedness! yea, more, beneath the lowest point to which thy sins could sink thee; yea, even when the willing slave of Satan, so dead in death and sin as not to feel thy misery, or know the horrors of the gulph that yawned below thee, yet even then, this glorious arm was underneath thy soul! though in thy madness thou seemed intent on making up thy bed in hell! yet even there, this precious arm glowing with tenderest compassion, encircled thee and held thee fast! and shall it let thee slip, now that its power has turned thy poor, needy, helpless, broken heart, towards thy Father's house of bread, and caused thee to arise and go to him, a yearning prodigal, seeking a Father's pardon, a Father's bosom, and a Father's home! Nay, fear not, poor starving Jeshurun! a banquet, rich and glorious awaits thee! for underneath thee is that all-provident and all-gracious arm of "EVERLASTING LOVE!" and then, to make the whole complete, and joining hands with this most glorious arm, another is put forth, to form a cradle for the new-born Jeshurun in time, and still to be the place of his repose, while endless ages shall roll on! it is "EVERLASTING CON-SOLATION!"

Now Jeshurun! beloved of the Lord! I challenge thee! in spite of all thy unbelieving fears, while thou art looking at these everlast-

ing arms, tell me, what can injure thee? yea more, what can unfit thee for a place in their embraces? can sin? can unbelief? can want of knowledge? can haste and heedlessness? can darkness, coldness, hard-heartedness, or deathliness of soul? can all the briars and the thorns which tear thee in the wilderness? can the pressing cares of this thought-absorbing, mind-engrossing little life of thine? Look at them all! say, how stands the matter? unfit! my brother, it is just these things in their daily workings, and combinations that make the everlasting arms as precious to my often distracted soul. Yes, and add to the catalogue, all that Satan can do, in alliance with the "old man which is corrupt according to the deceiful lusts." I will still press the question upon thee, Can these things injure thee, as thou art enfolded in the everlasting arms? can these things unfit thee for such a blessed position? The Lord help thee to look them over in all simplicity and Godly sincerity.

Sin plagues thee by its working in thy members? Did it plague Paul? Did it plague David? What says the first "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (margin, Rom. vii. 24). What says the second "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. "Create in me a clean heart. O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation!" (Psal. li. 10). Why did these special worthies cry thus for deliverance? Because it made them unfit for the blessedness which is to be found alone in the everlasting arms? Oh no, but why then? For the simple reason, that causes thee, every moment, to be sending up thy petitions in groanings which cannot be uttered, if thou art especially plagued by the corrupt workings of the law of sin in thy members. Why does the Balloon tug and tug again at the ropes which hold it down to the earth, and pant to be away? Is it because it is unfit to soar away in serene grandeur far above the murky atmosphere of the dirty city? No. But exactly the reverse. So with Paul, with David, with thyself my poor exercised Devil-hunted brother. only reason thou art so troubled and bowed down in thy feelings. because of the evil that works thee so much and such constant tribulation is, because thou hast the life of God in thy soul, which is of such a nature, that like the ascending power in the Balloon, it is ever impelling thy heart and mind upward in desire and holy longing after freedom from the felt contamination of this abominable corruption; the working of which makes thee appear to thyself—now that thou art a new-creature in Christ Jesus, living in his holy life, animated by his Holy Spirit, having his holy mind in thee-more like a monster sometimes than a Saint of God. But all turns upon this point! Now, we know there are some who hold what are called "high doctrines" whose practice is low indeed! these can evidently find pleasure in sin, and think nothing of it. Talk to such about sorrow for sin, they will sneer at you and call you an Arminian. But my brother, be not cast down by such, but if thou are cast in their way, keep thy sorrows to thyself, or tell them only to Him, who suffered for thy sin, that he might leave thee nothing more to "Cast not thy suffer, but that bitterness which arises from sin. pearls before swine." If there is a swine more filthy than another it is that wretch who can take a license from the doctrines of grace to live in sin, and indulge the gross propensities of the flesh with impunity. Who talks of the blood of the everlasting covenant, and yet by his practice treads it under his unhallowed feet. Are we better than they? No. But here is the turning point. tual life which makes Jeshurun a new-creature is a holy, ascending, a divine life. Where it is, sin in all its workings must be abhorred. The world and all its allurements can never satisfy, he is BORN FROM ABOVE. As a new-creature his native place is to be found only in the everlasting arms. And his only true happiness arises from a knowledge, by spiritual illumination, of the security and individual blessedness which is conferred upon him as an inhabitant of this most holy place.

And so of all those other matters which make a child of God feel his unfitness for so blessed an inheritance. They cannot unfit, but on the contrary, they are all measured out to the Lord's children by the hand of mercy, and are all intended to produce the very feeling of bitterness which is the consequence of the opposition they present to the up-goings of the renewed mind, and ultimately they shall all prove to be among Jeshurun's daily mercies, for by nature—

"Our hearts are fasten'd to the world, By strong and various ties," &c.

The Lord help thee, then, my brother, to see that whatever thy cross may be, it is not laid on thy weary shoulder to unfit thee for thy refuge in the everlasting arms; but to make thine eternal resting place more and more manifestly suitable and precious in thy esteem. For, as we shall see more at large in our next lecture, each glorious arm is provided, expressly to meet the case and the necessities of just such "worm Jacobs" as thyself.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No 5.)

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

"What a blessed thing it is to be poor!" replied my friend, to whom I had just said "What, I a master? I am the poorest little thing in the world!" and then he went on to add "Don't you see, If I were to go into the street and say to a respectable person, 'here is a penny for you' he would treat me with contempt, or say 'keep your penny man, I have pounds in my pocket, I don't want your penny! But how different if I were to go to a poor starving creature and say to him 'Here, my poor fellow is a penny to buy you some bread!' With what joy would he seize the penny! How would he from his heart bless me for my

penny!"

"It is just so," continued my friend "with the precious Gospel of Christ. Go to a respectable, self-satisfied professor, who thinks he is rich in all religious excellence and has need of nothing. Tell him you have brought him a Gospel penny from the royal covenant mint of heaven, stamped with the image of King Jesus on one side, and a wreath of olive and laurel—peace and victory—enclosing the precious words with which every spiritual penny is stamped that issues from that mint—"YEA and AMEN"—on the other. He would stare at you, and wonder at your assurance! But take the same penny to a poor dejected, feelingly-lost, condemned, hell-deserving, sinner; put it into his little empty hand of faith, and shew him that it is truly his own—a free gift, sent to him by a sinner-saving, covenant-keeping God! With what a bounding heart will the poor troubled one receive the penny! What makes the

difference? Felt poverty!—a true knowledge of self as seen in the light of God's countenance. There is no self deception here. And these alone know how to prize Christ and his precious Gospel. To these alone the ROYAL PROMISE comes with true spiritual sweetness

and power! Then, what a blessed thing it is to be poor!"

We have seen Jeshurun, in preceding lectures in his poverty, but have also beheld him in his glorious Refuge. We have seen him in his own utter weakness, but we have glanced at him also, as he lies folded up in the everlasting arms of his immutable and all glorious strength. We come now to examine those precious arms more particularly. The Lord help thee my brother, to bear continually in mind, while we gaze upon Jeshurun and all his glories to-day, the conclusion of the message which our adorable Christ sent to poor doubting John the Baptist; who, like you and I, when shut up in prison, began to call in question the reality of things spiritual. "The poor have the Gospel preached UNTO THEM." And it belongs to none beside.

Behold then, the blessedness and glory of Jeshurun! "Underneath are the everlasting arms!" I would write it my dear brother upon the walls of thy house! I would print it upon thy scathed and blighted heart! Borne above all, in eternal safety rests

JESHURUN.

(Little Israel: the beloved and upright one.)
SAFELY FOLDED IN THE ARMS OF THE

EVERLASTING COVENANT	} AND	ETERNAL POWER AND GODHEAD OF CHRIST;
ETERNAL REDEMPTION	} q x v	EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS;
EVERLASTING	} q {	EVERLASTING
LOVE		CONSOLATION.

It is easy to review the grand outline, but how difficult to realize by faith the full blessedness of the precious subject so as to sit down with David of old under the shadow of the Almighty with great delight! Indeed to look at the everlasting arms, or to know by a mere theoretical knowledge what is meant by them, is not enough. There must be such a knowledge of them as that which Isaiah the prophet found to arise from the "live coal" brought by the Seraph as he testifies to him "Lo this hath TOUCHED thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," (Is. vi. 7.) or again as Jeremiah, "Then the Lord put forth his hand, and TOUCHED my mouth.

And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth;" (Jer. i. 9.) or again as in the case of Daniel. The angel of the Lord TOUCHED him again and again, and power came with So again by many of the miracles of Jesus. touched the eyes of the blind, they saw! He touched the leper, he was cleansed! He touched the hand of the sick woman, and the fever left her! He touched the bier of the dead man, and called to him, and he that was dead sat up! It is still the same. There are the everlasting arms, always underneath every needy Jeshurun; yes, and he believes it too; but the spirit of the poor and needy can only rejoice fully in the unspeakable mercy, as the everlasting arms are so raised up and so sweetly brought to bear up the soul as to TOUCH with an all-sustaining power, the spirit of the sinking one, by which he knows assuredly, through the vigourous actings of faith, produced by such a touch, that like David of old, when thus under the immediate anointings of the Spirit, he might venture to say "Although my house be not so with God" that is, the tabernacle in which I dwell, or in other words-for I cannot but look at David's testimony as having ultimately this spiritual and individual personal sense, in which all God's children adopt it now—although in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing. Yet he hath made with me an EVERLASTING COVENANT ordered in ALL things and sure: for this is all my salvation and all my desire."

Now, my brother, do you know what it is to sing with David thus, while for a season sweetly reposing in the embrace of this precious arm? How highly prized are such moments

"When Jesus with his mighty love
Visits my troubled breast,
My fears subside, my doubts remove,
And I'm COMPLETELY blessed."

Nevertheless,

"Though with no sweet enjoyment blest The Cov'nant stands the same."

Still, I cannot but often appeal to my covenant God, on behalf of many a sinking one "Lord Touck them! let them realize by a DIVINE UPLIFTING that underneath are the everlasting arms!"

There is something most blessed in this simple statement of the Psalmist respecting this most glorious everlasting arm. Looking with a last glance at himself as he comes to his last words "These be the last words of David"—not so literally, but the summing up, or the conclusion of the whole matter.—All praises to our God, we may equally take them up as our last words with our adversary

every day!—After sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh had done its worst; or after all that unbelief could suggest; touched by sweet power from on high, David has one dear word to interpose. Although my house be not so with God, YET!" Oh precious YET! Let the accuser come in with ten thousand charges, take up thy position beloved behind this impregnable bastion. In whatever direction thine enemy may approach thee, thou shalt find this little word "YET" drive him back! Yes, IN all, "yet!" THROUGH all, "YET!" AFTER all "YET, He hath made with me an everlasting covenant!"

Again, mark the next step. It is not a covenant of our making! Poor Jeshurun! he may make his covenants with death and with hell; but thus saith the Lord "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." HALLELUJAH! (Is. xxviii. 18.) No, It is Jehovah's covenant, "HE hath made it." And "what God doeth shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing be taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before him." (Eccl. iii. 14.)

Again another step "He HATH made," not as some vainly talk, about "Potential blessings" existing in possibility but not in act. Alas! what would be the end of thee poor Jeshurun if the covenant hinged upon anything in thyself? But let God be true. "He HATH," not may or will, or might, could, would or should have done it; no, but it is eternally secure! An act of Covenant love finished.

"'Tis signed, 'tis sealed, 'tis rutified, In all things ordered well!

Cheer up then, my brother, and mark again, it is blessedly personal. "He hath made WITH ME," it is abiding in its fulness of grace. "Lo I am with you" says our glorious Covenant "always, even unto the ends of the world," (Matt. xxviii. 20.) And like Job David could say "I know that MY Redeemer liveth." But how are we to know the sweet personality of the mercy? By calling, and calling is known by the feeling sense of spiritual need which arises from being called out of darkness into light, out of death into life. So that we are constrained to remark again, that the presence of spiritual hunger and thirst after righteousness, is an abiding proof that Jehovah hath made with me this everlasting covenant, and therefore, that whereever I may sink in my feelings, still, always, and in all places "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

It is at this point, however, that our glorious arm shines forth in all His divine lustre, in answer to the question, what is this everlasting covenant? It is not like our parchment records containing abstract

agreements-mere words, but "Christ is all." The Person of Christ, or Christ personally, is our Covenant. He is the living WORD: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Christ personally, was the Father's eternal Donation to the Church. "God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son" (John iii. 16.) "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not WITH HIM also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32). And Jehovah gave Him, moreover, for a Covenant: as it is written, "I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee FOR a Covenant of the people, for a Light of the Gentiles; to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isa. xlii. 6, 7). This was David's glorious hope, and therefore he sings, with the eye of his faith fixed upon, and all the affections of his renewed heart swallowed up in the Person of Christ. "This is all my salvation, and all my desire." But David could not say this of anything short of the Person and glory of Christ. A mere engagement to save him from hell would have been blessed; but the renewed mind of the Psalmist could not stop at this point. Deliverance was not enough. Yea, more, to be put into possession of Paradise, blessed as that would be in itself; yet this could not constitute ALL his salvation, and ALL his desire. For we read of the woman-and this refers in type directly to Christ and his Church—"And her desire shall be unto her Husband." Yes, and He is ALL her desire, and ALL her salvation too. Therefore it follows that Christ personally was the Covenant upon which the eye and heart of the sweet singer were fixed, and He is the everlasting arm of Jehovah's strength by whom and in whom He ordained and accomplished all things.

This brings us to look towards the second glorious everlasting arm, which comes forth to make all certain, joining hands in eternal union for the completion of that which was ordered in all things, and that all may be blessedly sure. A knowledge of this becomes the more necessary, for since Christ personally is our covenant, and he alone thereby has become the upholder of his church. All Jeshurun's glory now hangs upon His stability, wisdom, grace, and power.

Behold then thine everlasting arms locked in each other on thy behalf. The everlasting covenant founded in the eternal power and God-head of Christ. Here is the key stone of the triumphant arch of Israel's glory, He is "Almighty to save" Almighty to support, Almighty to deliver, Almighty to provide. We must not

leave out of our estimate, however, that while our covenant is the ALMIGHTY "son given," upon whose shoulder is all government, whose name—or person —is Wonderful, Counsellor, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. He is also in our own very nature "THE CHILD BORN;" hence arises all the blessedness and glory to Jeshurun. It is in this union we find another key to the last words of David, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant." This grand truth stood side by side with the eternal power and Godhead, in the ordering of our covenant; that in the fulness of time. He, the eternal God, should come forth; sent of the Father for the express purpose; pass by the nature of angels; stoop into our very nature; made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE the adoption of sons. How sublimely grand are these "sure mercies of David." when we are led up by the Spirit, thus to contemplate the glories of God's people! as they were all caused to stand up in the person of their covenant! folded up in the everlasting arms before time itself was called into being, not in a pre-existing human life or subsistence, but in covenant union to the great Mediator, and in personal individual choice and predestination to the adoption of children in Him.

As an answer to all quibbles upon this vital point of our most holy faith, the eternal choice of Jeshurun, the Lord's holy people, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, I would ask, Is there a man who will call himself a Christian and yet deny that in the covenant, ordered in ALL THINGS and sure, the very person of the virgin and the very body of which it was said to Mary "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" as to the time and every circumstance of their existence were included in that divine ordering? But does it not follow that as the head-stone was there in covenant ordering, so every other stone of the building, to be fitly framed together, were there also? What! the head there without the members? for mark, "That holy thing" was no more there—so far as the humanity was concerned—than any of the meanest members: but the precious members in indissoluble union with their most glorious Head, standing in eternal life and unalterable blessedness, were folded up there, blessed there, and by virtue of this mystical union—faith does not need to enquire how this union subsisted—David delighted to behold himself in a condition, although not brought out into human visibility, to say in the confidence of faith, to his God and Father in Christ, inasmuch as thou hast entered into covenant with and given thine only begotten Son, my glorious Christ to be a covenant for me "Thou hast made with MR an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure."

Turning again to the second glorious arm. How precious to join to the ordering of all things in the first, the eternal power and Godhead in the second. Here we read the opening of the great secret spring of success in all. Here we see why the long list of patriarchs. priests, kings and prophets, failed not; but were borne onward with irresistible triumph to the end, and these things were all written for our examples: that we may, for our souls comfort and establishment read and learn where our great strength is to be found. God's Jeshurun with such a Head shall be found to be a Sampson indeed among all his enemies! And our eternal mercy stands now in this, that our risen Head is exalted high above the reach of every opposing power-no Delilah can reach Him-" Far above all principality. and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." So that although the Philistines may bind the body on earth, the glorious Head remains the same; the locks of our strength shall never be shorn, and therefore we shall ever be more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us.

Why was it Neah found grace in the Lord's eye? Because he was folded up in these everlasting arms. Why was it the Lord sware unto Abraham? Because he had given him an eternal abode in the covenant arms? Why was it all things, adverse as they were in appearance, worked together for Jacob's good? Was it not because all things were ordered by infinite wisdom and made as secure and as blessed as omnipotent love could make them in these everlasting arms? Moreover, what was the power but that put forth by our covenant which sustained Moses in all his mighty conflicts? Or David in his? Yea more, if we come down to the grand centre of all our triumphs. What was it but the same most glorious arm which conquered all on our behalf in the person of Christ? eternal power and Godhead enabled him to stand steadfast in a contest in which at one Almighty draught He swallowed up both hell and death in victory. How does the subject open up in its fulness! It follows then, that there is no such place as hell for a child of God. No. It is prepared for the devil and his angels, and the wrath of God as a fire burneth to the lowest hell. But no wrath can enter this holy place, the everlasting arms are full of love. Mercy and truth there meet together. Righteousness and peace there kiss each other. All is eternal friendship and peace. Nor shall they die any more, whose blessed portion is cast into these eternally living arms. Yes,

and all ordered things in these arms are sure—which literally signifies, watched, kept, looked after. How blessed the truth in its fulness! Our life is hid there. "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." He watches over our life. Our peace is there. He keepeth it and therefore it is written, "I will keep that man in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon me." Mark my brother. it is perfect peace in our covenant everlasting arms. Not in our own feelings. All may be commotion in our minds, and yet our peace with God in Jesus Christ our Lord, ever continues the same: since our warfare is accomplished in Him. All our interests, both for time and for eternity are there, and he watches over them. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," therefore, the Lord help you my brother, to leave all your interests in his keeping: saying, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me into glory." Could we live simply resting in these everlasting arms, we should understand the true meaning of that precious word spoken by Christ to his anxious followers—and I know all his dear followers and anxious ones still-" Take no thought for the morrow." Indeed, after all our care, and prudent thought-taking, daily experience tells us, that the dear Lord's simple way is the only safe way: to be always hanging all our affairs upon the everlasting arms. Yes, both temporal as well as spiritual, this is not only our precious privilege, but after all other fleshly schemes and devices are exhausted, this shall be found to be the great secret of Jeshurun's success.

And now, with one more precious word, I must close this lecture, in which far less progress has been made than was intended. But I find, even in writing my humble testimony for the Lord, the truth of that scripture fulfilled, "He that believeth shall not make haste," and why? Because in this, as it has been in every day's stage through my little pilgrim journey, at every step I am compelled to stand still and "ponder the path of my feet," and since I know it is so with all the Lord's living Jeshurun's, to be their companion, as I desire to be, I must be content to travel by easy stages.

But for my closing word, "The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him, and he will show them His covenant." What is the secret? "Thy life is hid with Christ in God," this is the secret which none but Jeshurun knows and feels. While his daily needs tell him that he possesses Jehovah's secret! But what satisfies all his needs? A sight of Christ! Tell thy Father, my brother, that he has promised to show thee His covenant!

٠.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN. -

(No. 6.)

"The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

THERE is something so deep and full in this most glorious inventory of Jeshurun's treasures, that every fresh repetition of the royal testimony warms my heart, and carries away my affections in sweet renewed anticipations of that "Right-hand" blessedness and undisturbed rest which remaineth for the people of God!

But then, what is it that gives the precious word such peculiar sweetness to my needy soul? It is because the divine Comforter has brought me by living communion into a little of the fulness of the text, and has made it to me as one of the royal banqueting-houses, in which I have, in my humble measure, sat under the shadow of an all-lovely Christ, and found his fruits sweet unto my taste. It is because in every line and every letter, by the ministry of the Spirit, I have been taught to look for and to find Jesus, the Covenant of Jehovah, which it is his delight to show unto all them who fear Him.

It is, however, not only the beauty and glory of the person of Christ that makes Him so transcendently precious to my soul; it is his divine SUITABILITY to my daily increasing NEED of such a Refuge, such upholding, such supply, such protection, and such unbounded tenderness, and long-suffering mercy, compassion, and love, as I find in Him, the more I know of Him. The experience of all this renders every object short of Himself a blank to my spiritual mind and affections. Yes, I am as full of needs as thou art, my trembling brother, and as full of fears too!

Yea, what are our fears but so many NEEDS? What are all our The Gospel Cottage Lectures. No. 25.

chequered circumstances and experiences but NEEDS? They are to be looked upon, and carried to a precious Christ as such, be they what they may; both outward and inward; whatever presses down the heart, is a NEED! and here stands the unalterable testimony of the Holy Ghost, "My God SHALL SUPPLY ALL your NEEDS, according [to what? according to your strength of faith? aboundings of love? stability of hope? circumspection and zeal? No; but according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ!" This is how he measures! What is thy emptiness? Is it not the most blessed thing in the world? Why? "The full soul loatheth an honey-But, thy living feeling of spiritual emptiness-and the more completely empty the better is thy condition—has made room for the fulness of Christ! THY NEED has opened a suitable channel for this divine supply! The greater the need, the larger the opening, the more full the flowing. Job could not have known the inexhaustible fulness of the provision which is laid up in Jeshurun's everlasting arms; had not his need been expanded as it was, to the utmost bounds of Satan's power, by which he was so nearly undone, that he declares he only escaped with the skin of his teeth! Jonah could not have understood how low down the everlasting arms were laid, that he might fall into them, and be brought up again, unless he had been plunged in his NEED to the very bottom of the mountains, with the weeds wrapped about his head. It was a knowledge of this fulness, and an intimacy with the person of Christ, in whom it has pleased the Father that ALL fulness should dwell. that sustained Paul under his manifold afflictions and persecutions. and enabled him to say, "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations;" although like thyself, my brother. "his flesh had no rest, but he was troubled on EVERY side; without were fightings, and within were fears" (2 Cor. vii. 4). I know. however, could I go round and compare notes with all my afflicted brethren in the Lord, that nine-tenths of the complaints I should hear, might be summed up in this, that it is the peculiar nature of the cross each one has to carry that causes him to stagger as he He does not think any other of the Lord's living family is tried in the same way that he is; he can look around and see many who he is sure are God's own people, he knows they are passing through much tribulation, and he can see the brightening effects of the daily trials upon their spiritual condition; their conversation is in heaven, all earthly comfort is marred to them, they are manifestly strangers and pilgrims here. Ah, my brother, but you cannot see all ! Paul had afflictions and tribulations which all the brethren

could see floating on the surface of his troubled waters, and on account of which they could sympathize most lovingly with him, but they could not see his thorn in the flesh! the messenger, Satan! No, that was as a worm at the root of all his comforts, which as far out-matched all outward crosses, as that which is personal outmatches that which is relative; as pain in one's self out-matches pain in one's friend. We know not what Paul's thorn was, but being in the flesh, there was sin connected with it, which caused him to groan under its working; but could you have conversed with Paul about all the exercises which came upon him independent of his thorn—for it is probable that God alone knew about Paul's thorn—and could you have traced all the workings of Paul's soul as he went over those more outward matters, how often would you have heard the deep-drawn sigh, the burden of which, could you have read it, would have been, Ah, what is all this compared with this horrid thorn? My brother, whatever thy peculiar cross may be, the Lord help thee to take it only to Jeshurun's Refuge! Thy only true remedy is to be found in the everlasting arms! There, casting ALL thy care, thou shalt find such a glorious fulness of suitable grace, that in the knowledge of its power, thy bitterest thorns shall present to thee grounds for the highest exultation and joy. Not on account of any sin that may rankle as a poison in the wound, impossible! but while the sin is abhorred, confessed, repented of, and resisted unto blood, the knowledge of the power and blessedness of the everlasting arms will cause thee to sing, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Paul's was a PECULIAR cross! moreover, he had to wait long before he could understand why he was compelled to carry it. Now the conclusion we must draw from all these things is this—the Lord engrave it upon thy heart, my brother—nothing has befallen thee that can UNFIT thee for the everlasting arms; but rather, every circumstance has added to the blessedness of a knowledge of their entire SUITABILITY to just such a totally needy and nothing worm as thou art daily discovering thyself to be! Fear not, peculiar as thy case appears to thyself now, thou art learning that "new song" which no man can learn but the "redeemed from the earth." And what are the precious subjects contained in the "new song?" Are they not those two grand and everlasting arms which are underneath all God's Jeshuruns, and out of which they can never fall? namely ETERNAL REDEMP-TION AND EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS! The one securing eternal salvation, and the other everlasting justification.

It stands as a truth revealed in the word of God, and the needy child of God knows the preciousness of having the same truth sealed by the living power and unction of the Holy Comforter upon his anxious heart; that Christ made a REAL PURCHASE with his blood. "Feed the Church of God, which He hath PURCHASED with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28). Again (adopting the marginal reading, which gives a fuller and better sense of the testimony), "But ye are a CHOSEN generation, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD (Rev. i. 6), a HOLY nation, a PURCHASED people; that you should show forth the VIRTUES of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9).

I know that every child of God who has been stripped of ALL his own self-righteous rags-and mark, my brother, these are religious rags-yes, whatever it be in our religion, to which we cling, and which we admire, which stops short of the Person and work of Christ, belongs to these rags—and not only stripped, but who has been emptied of ALL strength in himself, so that he FERLS by the LIVING PRESSURE of HOURLY NEED, the truth of Christ's declaration to his disciples, "Without me ye can DO NOTHING"-but sin and rebel! I say, I know that every child of God who, by the Spirit's ministry, has been brought down into this low place of abject nothingness, will rejoice with me that this glorious PURCHASE. this ETERNAL REDEMPTION, is not a possible salvation, only depending in the slightest degree upon any contingent circumstance within the power of the sinner; but a complete, irreversible, and ETERNALLY UNFAILING act of INFINITE LOVE, whereby the person of every individual whose name was enrolled in the deed of purchase is made as truly the property of the purchaser, and as intimately one with Him, eternally bound up in all his interests, as Ruth became the property of Boaz when he had paid the redemption-price! Nothing short of such a redemption could, I confess, keep me from black despair! Although outwardly I might measure lances with many a starched pharisee; yet inwardly, the discoveries made by the clear shining of divine light, and the knowledge obtained by the living feeling of spiritual life, calls for a verdict which must consign such an one to eternal unmitigated woe. Be not alarmed, my anxious brother, as the "chambers of thy imagery" (Ezek. viii. 12) are unlocked and presented to thine astonished view! Bitter as are the discoveries, there are no steps which lead so directly to the foot of the cross! There is no knowledge or feeling as that which is gained under such discipline, which makes the precious blood of Christ so invaluable, or the purchase which it sealed and completed so glorious. Mere religion cannot make such a man happy; but a knowledge of the completeness and immutability of that standing in Christ Jesus, which flows to him through this channel of divine love, manifested in the purchase of the Redeemer's precious blood, will cause him to join with me with a full—an overflowing heart, and

"Sing as we pass through this valley of tears, The righteous SHALL hold on HIS WAY!"

But now mark, my brother, a mother does not love her babe because of its beauty, its obedience, its smiles, or its knowledge. No; it may be a deformed, afflicted, peevish cripple, or almost an idiot; still the tender heart of the loving mother yearns over her little one with the more perfect devotion, as its misery or needs call the louder for sympathy. But why does she love the babe? It is her own child; a second self, dearer to her than its original! Suppose her babe stolen from her, and carried away into captivity by an enemy, and not to be redeemed without the payment of a certain large sum; but yet a sum which the tender mother could command. Would she hesitate to pay the sum to redeem her darling? she be content to enjoy that which the redemption-price would purchase in another way, and leave her helpless babe in the hands of cruel monsters to torment it in slavery? Does thy heart shudder, my brother, at a thought so revolting? And yet how art thou daily thinking of thine ever-loving, yea, everlastingly-loving Father; who loves thee with an infinite love, so great, that eternity itself will not be expansive enough to run out its divine thread, or unfold its vast fulness? Art thou dwelling upon all that He teaches thee, as flowing from this love? Art thou in the daily habit of reckoning the value, the extent, and the blessedness of all spiritual things according to this rule; as flowing to thee and bestowed upon thee in his infinite wisdom and by his almighty power in proportion to this love?

Look again, my brother. Could you see the little captive babe weeping in its captivity, and at the same time see the mother's heart yearning over it, and after it, knowing that she had paid the ransom, and was hasting to clasp her purchased treasure to her breast, would you not soothe the troubled child, and assure it of its loving parent's speedy arrival to CLAIM IT AS HER OWN? Would it avail against thy testimony, for the weeping little one to take you to a mirror and point out its defects and ugliness, or the slave's garments in which those who had led it captive had clothed it?

you would smile at the child's folly; you would tell it of the strong love that more than supplied beauty and perfection to the most uncomely. You would turn the tearful face of the disconsolate one away from the mirror, and direct its eyes toward the hills whence cometh its help! You would whisper in its ears the last words of the departing loving one, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." My brother, have God's words less of real fulness and meaning than man's words? Listen to his wonderful answer to Zion's lamentations, and measure a little of the blessedness of this Redeeming everlasting arm! "But Zion said"—ah, my brother, let cavillers say what they may in their carnal (Rom. viii. 7) enmity to the particular and sovereign discriminating love and purposes of our God. It is Zion alone which is thus loved and comforted! It is the mother's own babe alone she hastens to redeem! Among ten thousands of others, more comely in themselves, it is upon this weeping afflicted one alone she pours out all her sympathy -" But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me! Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? YEA, THEY MAY FORGET, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

Zion was cast down, in bitterness of soul, had been long looking for the Lord's coming, that the sweet power of his presence might cast out every anxious fear and misgiving as to his love; but He still delayed, and she looked upon his delays as tokens of indifference or forgetfulness. It is just so with Zion still, she is prone to measure the Lord's love by her own feelings of enjoyment, rather than by the known character of Jehovah, whose love must necessarily be like himself, infinite and immutable! and therefore admits not of any fluctuations like our ever-changing experiences, nor can it become more or less.

Just as in the case of the babe, its redemption took its rise in the love of the mother, altogether independent of any qualities either lacking or possessed in the child; so the eternal redemption of "happy Zion" took its rise in the covenant love of Jehovah before time began! Jeshurun may put this truth from him, and sit weeping before the mirror, despising himself, and listening to the arch suggestions of the enemy of Jesus, as he points out the numberless defects and deformities which are ever discovering themselves in the flesh; but all this is but acting the part of a foolish and ignorant child. Yea, it is charging God foolishly. Joy and peace in

believing do not come in this way. The contemplation of self, with the view of seeking a reason why the Lord should either love or hate. must lead to sorrow of heart and turmoil of spirit! Nevertheless, to contemplate self with a view to magnify the riches of Jehovah's grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus, is a most profitable and God-honouring, Christ-exalting employ! For, while the utmost self-loathing must arise in the renewed mind of a child of God, from the discoveries of the workings of the law of sin in the members. and the deformities produced thereby must be hated beyond the power of language to express; just as the redeemed child would shudder at the remembrance of its terrible captivity, yet the very feeling of pain produced by recollections of the past, would cause the little one to exult with an unboundedly multiplied joy at the recovered blessedness experienced now that it is securely folded in its own tender maternal arms. Queen Esther could sigh and shudder at the recollection of her captivity while she beheld herself arrayed in the gorgeous displays of her husband's majesty; but every such recollection added solid pleasure to the scenes which surrounded her. It is thus with Jeshurun when rightly contemplating himself as he is folded in security in the arms of eternal redemption and everlasting righteousness, while on the one hand he sighs at the remembrance and presence of the law of sin, yet on the other he finds solid joy and peace flow into his soul from the contemplation of the grand fountain head of all his true blessedness. which is nothing short of the infinite unchanging love of Jehovah set upon him in the ages of eternity, before the foundation of the Satan may meet him on this ground, if he dare, but while Jeshurun by faith lies hidden here, his enemy finds him in the position of one described by Paul as built up in Christ. "Till we all come into (margin) the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more CHILDREN, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. iv. 13). In this strong hold Satan and unbelief can find no abiding! The Lord help thee, my beloved brother, thus to dwell upon the precious subject of the purchase of thy dear Redeemer! And thou shalt find as this is made the blessed starting point in thy contemplation of this eternal arm of encircling mercy, that every property connected with redemption partakes of the same measure, and coincides with the eternal love of God in extent.

Our gracious God has given us the case of the mother and bee

little child as faintly setting forth his mindfulness of his children, and we do well to weigh carefully the motives which influence the tender mother in all she does for her darling. Nor can we be too simple, or live too much like helpless babes with our covenant Father here. Love is the first grand cause of every act of kindness; but it is love that moves upon one centre, namely union! The extent of the love coincides with the extent of the union! Rz-LATIONSHIP is the great secret of all our blessedness-" My Father and YOUR Father! MY God and YOUR God!" "He is not ashamed to call them BRETHREN." The covenant engagements entered into between the Eternal Three in the great council of peace, had respect to the one royal family. The entire revelation of the mind of God in every type and prophecy under the old dispensation, and especially in regard to God's chosen Jeshurun—typical Israel; the whole of the ministry of Christ handed down to us in the four gospels; the full development of the great scheme of love, as given to us by the inspiration of the Holy Comforter through the apostles; and finally the historical portrait of the Church contained in the Apocalypse; all go to prove most conclusively that Jehovah stands and ever has stood in personal relation to a certain people, of whom He has declared, "This people have I formed for myself, they SHALL shew forth my praise." This is his own royal family! It is a glorious CIRCLE, containing a number which no man can number! and it shall be found, that every line which radiates from the one grand centre coincides in extent.

The heart of Moses the man of God, as he stood at the foot of Pisgah, contemplating the everlasting arms, found his blessedness in tracing up all to the one immutable centre, love and union! Therefore he exclaims, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by Jehovah!" Mark, my brother, they were still in the wilderness, their enemies had still to be conquered, and their inheritance still to be subdued and possessed. Yet Moses declares them to be a SAVED PEOPLE! Where was the eye of his faith? Was it not fixed on the revealed purpose of Jehovah in loving them, in choosing and in making them his people, knowing that every divine act in carrying out the purpose must coincide with the first outgoings of his love.

But we must pursue this precious subject further in our next lecture. "Let the peace of God RULE in your hearts." Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No. 7.)

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii, 27—29.

DIVINE relationship in eternity fixed the number of the redeemed: their holy calling in time makes it manifest who they are. In all our humble attempts to comfort and build up our beloved brethren in the Lord, we have endeavoured to lay by the side of every jewel in Jeshurun's treasury, a sure token, by which the Lord's poor and feelingly needy ones may know that the rich treasure and the untarnishable glory belong to them. Knowing that it is useless to exhibit these things for the encouragement and growth of God's little faiths, unless you can bring their doubtful minds to some degree of assurance that to themselves belong the testimony, "All are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." We must however now be content to refer them to what has already been said as to tokens of ownership and title deeds, and come at once to the contemplation of the everlasting arm of Jeshurun's redemption.

In last lecture we were looking at this blessed fact, that whatever the extent of the first line that radiates from the grand centre in the circle of God's royal family; every other line drawn from the same centre must coincide in extent therewith. "He is the rock. his work is perfect! for ALL his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." None can deny. without contradicting the first principles of the truth concerning the nature and being of Jehovah, that HIS WILL ALONE determines the

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 30.

extent of every line connected with the glorious redemption purchase of the blood of Christ. "HAVING predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein HE HATH MADE us accepted in the Beloved: IN WHOM we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. i. 5). Observe now, the introduction of this truth that all was done "according to the good pleasure of HIS WILL"by the word "HAVING," takes us back to the statements of the Holy Ghost in the two preceding verses, which at once points out that it was according to, that is, wholly governed by, the good pleasure of HIS WILL, that He chose his predestinated children in Christ "before the foundation of the world;" and having chosen them, thatstill governed by the good pleasure of his will—He blessed them with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS in heavenly things in Christ Jesus." The frustration of the purposes of God would rob Him of his glory: for it will be found, that whatever glorifies God, does so because it fulfils his will! Christ himself expressly declares this; "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do!" Again, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." If then according to the good pleasure of his will, He chose and blessed his children with all spiritual blessings, as his children, in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, does it not follow that all these spiritual blessings must coincide with the first blessing which arose out of his choice, namely, relationship?

Here, however, although I do not desire to enter the field of controversy, yet because I know many of the Lord's living ones are caught in the trap, I must devote a few pages to the contemplation of that gross fallacy in connexion with the doctrine of redemption, which prevails to a vast extent in our day of tinselled profession. It is said by the advocates for "universal redemption," that unless it be universal they could not freely OFFER Christ to all the world, to which they add a declaration that it is THE DUTY of every man to believe, which is followed up by the affirmation that every man has a latent power to believe if he will. Now I take this creed on to the Stock Exchange, and see what a calculating man of the world will make of it. And I believe millions are being at this moment rocked to sleep in Satan's cradle under the soothing influence of this deceitful lullaby. A man of the world will argue thus: I have the power to turn to God when I will. I can believe in the Lord Jesus Christ when I will; this point is settled, for I follow the minister to the dying bed of an old sinner, and I hear him tell the same story there, The old sinner repents, he weeps, he believes, and all is right; his heart is cheered by hearing that he need not fear being cast out, for Christ has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out!" God is faithful to his promise, and delights in mercy; therefore the question now comes to this, I love the world and its pleasures, I am not wicked overmuch, sudden death is not of frequent occurrence, the risk is not great, I will make up my mind to enjoy the present; as at any moment by turning to God I can in a few hours at most make all right by repenting and believing. The man who preaches universal redemption and duty-faith, which necessarily includes in it man's power to believe, need look narrowly to his calling, lest he prove at last to be one of the devil's underwriters; who by his teaching has thus insured the cargo of many a Gallio who in sailing gaily on, calculating with true commercial precision what he conceives to be the amount of his risk, in holding on his flesh-pleasing course; rather than striking sail and labouring day and night against wind and tide in what he conceives to be a melancholy hope of reaching the land of peace.

"What makes mistaken men afraid,
Of sov'reign grace to preach;
The reason is, if truth be said,
Because they are so rich." (Rev. iii. 17.)

No, the word of God contains no commission for such offers. But Christ plainly says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." The word preach, signifies to proclaim publicly—not to offer. But what is to be proclaimed? A part of the good tidings, or the whole thereof? An ambassador must be faithful. He may find his carnal mind dislike certain parts of his commission, but is his judgment to be set above God's wisdom? Christ himself has left us a pattern of preaching in his address to Nicodemus. Did He make offers to Nicodemus? No; but He gave him a plain statement of unalterable truth, "Ye must be born again: and then He pointed out the sure effects of the new birth. "But he that doeth troth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought IN GOD" (John iii. 21).

This is the sure effect of that conviction of soul which arises from the Spirit's work upon the heart of a child of God. Therefore, with this holy pattern of true preaching before me, I must conclude that

he only fulfils the mission of an ambassador of Christ faithfully, who boldly—in spite of the unpopularity of the subject—declares to all the world, that God has in his gospel revealed to us that He has a hidden people, whom He has chosen for himself, and whom He gave to his only-begotten Son to purchase, and whom Christ, who voluntarily became their Surety, has purchased with his own precious blood. That these who are thus purchased are God's children. "redeemed from among men." That as God's children, they stand in a relationship to Him to which they were predestinated "before the foundation of the world." Moreover, that "BECAUSE THEY ARE sons"-not to make them sons, but because they are sons-"God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba. Father!" And into whatsoever heart the Spirit of God is sent, that son of God is thereby made a NEW CREATURE; "for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." That every such NEW CREATURE instantly makes it manifest that a mighty change has taken place; "for if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away! behold all things are become new !" That which he once hated-and nothing more so than the sovereign grace of God, as manifested in the purchase of his hell-deserving soul-now becomes his soul's delight. That in which he once found his chief pleasure, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," has now become his greatest torment, and is that above all other things, which in the bitterness of his soul he abhors. Yes, lest any hirking deceiver hold his influence in his soul, this new creature will be daily doing that which Christ declared assuredly should follow on being born from above. He is now a child of light. He dreads above all things being deceived, because he sees and appreciates the danger; he knows how easy a thing it is for a blind, dead sinner to be deceived by the father of lies, and to be led to cry peace, peace, where there is no Therefore morning by morning, this spiritually living one. this "DOER OF THE TRUTH," is seen coming to the light; and the cry is incessantly gushing from his anxious heart, "Search me. O God, and try me; see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." But what is it that makes him so earnest in his search? The whole truth has flashed upon his heart. and is now clearly seen in the new light of spiritual life! The grand foundation-doctrine of PREDESTINATION stands as a mountain of brass that nothing can shake; and the one great and solemn question which this new creature must get solved, before he can be happy, is. Am I one of God's predestinated children? It is that

he may get this question solved, that he comes to the light. He inquires what are the unquestionable features of God's elect. learns that they are a CALLED people; that their CALLING is by the Holy Ghost; that it is out of darkness into God's marvellous light; that in that light these called ones see things as God sees them. Now, what is the effect of all this? Is it to cause them to sail on in a state of security, depending upon a false hope, calculating the probable risk of putting off the day of reckoning? No. But the sure effect will be, that which Peter clearly points out in the first chapter of his second epistle. There will be a "giving all diligence, adding to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance: and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity......Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your CALLING and election sure: for, if ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so" ["DOING TRUTH," which is coming to the light, that it may be made manifest that his deeds, as a doer of truth, are not wrought in the flesh, as a Pharisee's deeds are, but that as a NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST JESUS, his deeds are "wrought Again, see John iii. 21]. "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly [by the full assurance of faith in a knowledge of your CALLING, and therefore as a sure deduction therefrom of your election in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world] into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i. 5—11). But why is calling made of such solemn importance by the Apostle Peter? It is because calling is one of the golden links in that most glorious chain of manifested grace, which, if we can but prove to have been extended to us, so as to have taken us into its living embrace, we know that we belong to God's predestinated family; as it is written, "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." It was thus "doing truth," that brought Paul to so glorious a conclusion in connection with the words last quoted, "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?.....Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?.....Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. viii. 30, &c.)

This is God's way of revealing to his predestinated Jeshuruns the fulness of all grace, which before the foundation of the world He laid up in covenant in the everlasting arms. He calls him by his grace; which calling contains in it the gift of eternal life, in.

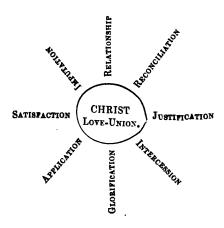
which he is born again from above, and by the light of which he discovers his true need of a precious Christ. Convictions of sin arising from this cause, can only be blotted out of the conscience by the Divine sprinkling of the same blood which paid the sinner's ransom price. And how does this come? Not by duty-faith! But by the witnessing of the Spirit that Christ's precious blood was shed FOR ME! By this we know that all other blessings and blessedness is personally our own—the free gift of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to us personally in covenant before the foundation of the world! This precious witnessing, however, does not come so easily as some persons imagine. For although we dare not raise any standard, and say a child of God must pass through any definite depths of sorrows under first convictions; for God the Holy Ghost is as truly a Sovereign in the manifestations of the grace given to us, as the Father was in the original bestowal thereof on the Church in Christ; yet this certainly is true, that all who lay their foundation, and build upon the rock. have to "dig deep," and generally this digging work is accompanied with many bitter searchings of heart, and fears, that after all their spot is not the spot of God's people. One thing however is certain, if their earnestness arise from the life of God in the soul, and is the fruit of the work of the Spirit in their hearts in divine calling; the longer the Spirit delays the precious sealing of that divine call by the revelation of the blood of sprinkling in the conscience, the more earnestly will the living one dig daily after the hidden treasure—the solid Rock. Yes, and in the midst of this deep digging, the holy Comforter gives the fainting Jeshurun many a sip of the brook by the way, which causes him to hope on, and press with renewed vigour after the prize.

But what after all is the great incentive to this earnest seeking? It is a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is a knowledge of the consistency of Jehovah's plan of salvation. It is a knowledge by spiritual illumination of the great things that are freely given to the Church by God. It is a discovery of the blessedness which belongs to God's chosen ones in Christ Jesus, with which they were blessed before the foundation of the world. The Spirit of God shows them the treasure hidden in the field, as He did to Paul, straightway they hide it—they are not great talkers about sacred things at first—but they go and sell all that they have, which is the same thing as Paul's suffering the loss of all things—and buy that field. And a blessed purchase they find it! "Come buy of me.....without money and without price." And each can never rest

contented until they carry the title-deeds—the witnessing of the Spirit in their own souls, that the everlasting arms are, and have been—eternally underneath them.

What are the so-called conversions in our day? Are they of this living character? Do they truly draw a living line between the world and the Church, so that the Person of Christ, the glorious Head and Husband of the Church, having been revealed in the heart—secret spiritual communion with Him is that after which the soul is panting every hour, "as the hart panteth after the water brooks"—not in word, but in the living up-going of soul, with a fervour of love more intense than the desire of the most closely and dearly cemented friendships can furnish which are now upon earth?

Let not little-faith mistake me here. I refer now to those who are satisfied with their religion; and who take it for granted they are going to heaven; but who find that their religious sympathies are nourished and regaled, quickened and satisfied, by the excitement of a vigorously-conducted religious meeting, or by the overflowing eloquence of a popular minister, rather than by the position of lonely Mary, as she sat at the feet of Jesus, and contemplated the glory of his Divine Person, and listened to the pouring forth of the rich ointment which flowed from his precious lips. I say it without a desire to disparage the great work which is being carried on by their efforts for the ultimate glory of God. That the lamp of the general profession of our day would assuredly go out, if it were not supplied with oil from the commercial fountains of excitement, furnished by our religious societies. But where shall we find the cause? I believe it in the sight of God, and in the fear of the Lord I say it, that the tinselled character of our general profession is to be traced, as to a second cause, to the withholding the full testimony of the Spirit in the Gospel, as preached in days that are gone by; by a Luther, a Calvin, and a Witsius; a Goodwin, an Owen, and a Brooks; a Charnock, a Bishop Hall, and a Boston; a Hervey, a Toplady, and a Romaine; a Gill, a Bunyan, and a Huntington—not forgetting a Hawker, a Hart, and a Gadsby. A constellation of living light fixed by Jehovah in the kingdom of heaven, differing indeed in their various gifts and positions, but all delighting in the unvarnished declaration of the immutable counsels of Jehovah; and all of whom, with many besides in their days and generations, "Shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God." And I will venture to suggest the form of the compass-card by which they all steered, the life of God within being the needle which gave effect to the whole. Take the Person of Christ including Love and Union for the centre; then flowing from this, each blessed point connected with the eternal redemption of the Church, and every line shall be found to coincide in extent with the first: thus—



Let the peace of God RULE in your hearts. Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No. 8.)

"The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He'shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

On referring to the "compass-card" with which I closed up last lecture, many may at first sight charge me with omitting one most important point in the spiritual compass, namely, Sanctification. It will, however, be seen that our interest in either of the cardinal points, or in the grand centre itself, can exist only as we are partakers of sanctification. The Father could not love an unsanctified Christ could not stand in living union with an unsanctified person. Neither could an unsanctified person hold the glorious relationship of a son of God, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, a member of the one body of Christ, the bride of the Lamb, a branch in the living vine, or a living stone in the spiritual But since the Church of Christ has eternally stood temple. in the position included in all these branches of relationship, it follows that the Church in every member thereof, must have been eternally sanctified. Yes, in the double sense in which the term is to be understood; first, as it relates to the eternal consecration or setting apart of every chosen vessel for the holy and honourable use of being to the praise and glory of Jehovah's grace; and secondly, as it relates to the complete meetness for the full display of that grace in all holiness and perfection as new-creatures in Christ The whole of this, the Church had IN COVENANT in the Person of Christ from everlasting! The whole of this, moreover, the Church had confirmed and made eternally real in the Person of Christ, when "By his one offering He PERFECTED FOR EVER them. [THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 31.

that are sanctified." The whole of this, every individual member of the body of Christ, is put into actual possession of, when, in the time appointed in the covenant, ordered in ALL things and sure, the new-creation work is performed in and upon them, in regeneration. Their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is but the development and expansion of that holy new life which they have, and in which they live, and move, and have their being, as new creatures in Christ.

The dear child of God who does not fully and clearly apprehend the simplicity of this truth, will say, "But if this be true, how is it that I am daily discovering myself to be far more full of evil than in days that are past I could have conceived to be in my nature?" This question will particularly arise, where the complainant has been brought up—as it is called—piously; but who, having been quickened into spiritual existence, has found that all abstract doctrine, or outward profession, however scriptural, is not sufficient to feed and satisfy the living spiritual needs of one of God's true Jeshuruns. The question will take another form in those who have been arrested in a career of outward morality, but who are, under the divine energy of the Holy Ghost, brought into spiritual life. These will rather inquire, "How is it that I still find working in my nature the same propensities, which, before I was converted. carried me onward by their irresistible power, as I was then led captive by the devil at his will? especially, as for a time, when under the sweet shinings of the Lord's first-manifestations of love to my soul, they appeared to be so far subdued, that I hoped they were nearly dead."

Behold, my brother, the simplicity of the matter. By nature we are all living in a dark sepulchre of spiritual death. There we were brought forth; there we have been brought up. It is by nature our only home; and by nature we take delight in it. But how solemn is the truth in God's sight! In it there is nothing but sin! It is full of vipers, and toads, and horrid filthy crawling reptiles, which are ever winding their slimy tortuous way around our very hearts. By nature these are our companions; with whom we take our inward secret pastime. Alas! for "the thoughts and intents of the heart." "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that the whole imagination (margin) including the purposes, thoughts, and desires of his heart, was ONLY vill continually "(Gen. vi. 5). But by nature we are in total darkness, therefore we see not the terrific forms or revolting ugliness of the monsters which swarm within. In our state of spiritual death, the

effects of their venom is soothing, pleasant—yea, joyous. Indeed, such a charm has even the poison of their breath upon us, that we love that which is multiplying our future misery.

Ah! and could we go over the names and characters of all these abominations, how many should we find which are cherished among men as religious idols; for in this yault of death there are antagon-Even here man's deadliest foes act in classes; as one prevails, the opposite must sink in power. There is a state of darkness which is mistaken for light. "But if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness." Take a Nero and a Paul. In the one, the brutal passions in combination drive into banishment those imps of Satan, which in Paul—before God stopped him—had neutralized the poison of the brute; and having evaporated the coarser gases, and so laid prostate the fleshly lusts, had inflated the chamber of death with the subtle, and, if possible, more deadly vapours of the pride of Pharisaism; which gave animation and vigour to a thousand loathsome monsters; the more disgusting and hateful, because held up in malicious defiance of Jehovah, by Satan himself, as his own most successful caricatures of that which is most holy. Alas! how little does many an earnest devotee to outward sanctity, imagine that he is pressing to his heart, and cherishing, in the shape of his religion, with what he conceives to be most holy zeal, one of the deadliest, ugliest, and most detestable scorpions ever hatched in hell! Ask Paul what he thought of that reptile which he discovered at his heart, when Jesus called to him at the gates of Damascus!

It matters not, however, which class of abominations may be in the ascendant. When God the eternal Spirit enters the chamber of death, his presence sanctifies that chamber, and converts it into a temple, in which henceforth He ministers. The moment He enters, He suspends from its vaulted roof a living lamp of inextinguishable fire. That soul is now "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word—the Christ—of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23).

Now begins the mighty—yea, the eternal change. Henceforth all depends on the bright shining of this lamp of life. By its living rays all things are discovered to be as they are. It is in that light we see light, for Christ personally is that light. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4). In his light we see Himself; and in and by Himself we see our need of all He is made of God to us. Then follow the sure effects, which are as inevitable as breathing to the new-born living child. If it lives it must breathe; so, wherever this true living light shines, there a discovery

is made of the horrid reptiles by which we are infested; and the brighter the light shines, the greater the number, and the more intense their ugliness will appear.

But then, the next inevitable effect must arise out of the discoveries made by this light; and where this effect is not manifested, a man may talk about doctrines, and about his zeal; yea, he may do and say a thousand fine things, but show me the absence of this effect of divine light, and I will venture to point to that man as to one who is in the darkness of spiritual death, in spite of his most clamorous pretensions. This effect of the shining of the light of life in man's soul, is often called "progressive sanctification;" but the calling this sure effect of divine life and light by such a name leads to many great mistakes, and to much confusion of mind.

The more we see of the abominable things which surround us, the more must we hate them; and the greater the intensity of our hatred to the accursed thing—which belongs to the old man, and is sin in its thousand shapes—the more shall we groan being burdened, every moment earnestly desiring to be quit of it, that we may be free from these vile and detestable things.

Here, however, I must pause to observe to thee, my brother, what an inestimable mercy it is that these hateful things are in the chamber of death alone; and that they do not form a necessary part of our nature! The moment the captive exile is released, these monsters will cease to exist; and when we return to our reanimated clay, we shall not find it defiled by such inhabitants! Blessed be our gracious God, they have lost their empire already, since the true light now shineth; but then we shall see them no more for ever!

What, however, is the incessant occupation of the new creature now? New, because of the light that is streaming through every crevice of the heart, which will not suffer a single wicked thing to be hidden. New, because in that holy light this soul is eternally to live; never shall it go out again, but burn, as he steps forward in his pathway to his Father's glorious home, brighter and brighter "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18). What then is the occupation of this new creature? The crawling reptiles are ever coming on in battle array, class after class. But the living one is now clothed in the "armour of light," and cannot but fight, yea, and ultimately cannot but conquer too. But such is the nature of the warfare, that no sooner has the child of God triumphed over one class who may have attacked him in front, than another class rushes upon his rear. It

is so! conquer a lust, and the next moment expect to be in deadly strife with pharasaic pride! Yes, and so shall it continue until the last day of the wilderness campaign! There is no discharge in this war! Not one of the monsters are slain, but they are PUT OFF! And this is the sum of the great battle, "putting off the old man

with his deeds," every day, yea every hour.

The leading teaching in Paul's epistles goes to prove that experience in this warfare, fighting in this light against the powers of darkness, is that which constitutes a good soldier of Christ Jesus. And here I must add, that any other teaching, which leads to the expectation that scorpions and vipers are to become angels of light, is delusive in the extreme, and have the tendency to render a Nero content with a change of preferences merely, which by neutralizing the openly impure, causes him to give himself up to the companionship and embraces of a far more fatally delusive thing called by a religious name.

No, my brother; the light is shining in thy soul. It cannot go out, for it is the light of life; and not a mortal, but an eternal life. Because it is there, sin cannot have the dominion over thee. canst not embrace that, and love that, which is more repulsive to thee, now thou canst see it in God's pure light, than even death No, Joseph by the aid of this light saw the viper in all its filthiness, and terrified by the sight of its gliding enchanting artifices, rushed from its coil screaming in horror, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!" Fear not, my tempted brother, it is impossible for Satan with all his craft to cause one of God's Jeshuruns, who is living with the light shining in the sepulchre of death, to make these abominations his delight. It cannot be; ho-- liness can never love sin! as well might it be said that darkness is produced by the rising of the sun.

Some exercised child of God will say, "But I feel and find daily a multitude within me that loves nothing but sin, and therefore I fear I cannot be a new creature in Christ." True, a legion is in thy heart, whose whole delight is in evil. But who are they? Are they not the very vipers of which I have been speaking? Viper loves viper, and "dust shall be the serpent's meat!" ones within, which Paul calls the law of sin in the members, can only feed upon fleshly things. Spiritual blessednesses are nothing to them. It is of great importance to the comfort of God's children to be brought to a clear apprehension of these points; and it is only as they are thus instructed by the Spirit, to keep up a clear line of distinction between the workings of the viners, and the workings and effects of the holy light of life, upon the renewed mind, that the spiritual man can understand the meaning of the apostle, where he says, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. vii. 17).

For a hard-hearted wretch to take these words upon his lips, and go on sinning in indifference, while he makes these wonderful words of Paul his cloak, is to prove himself to be a lover of the works of darkness, and therefore dead in sin. But for a living, weeping, broken-hearted child of God, who is ever fighting with all the strength which the grace of God furnishes him with, and mourning that he comes so short in the battle, these words, as opened to his renewed and enlightened understanding by the ministry of the Spirit, show to him, that although the vipers are there, and they seem to multiply rather than decrease, there is no reason in the discovery why he should cast away his confidence; but, if rightly understood, the perception of these things, and the bitter distress produced by them on the soul, furnish the best of reasons for strong confidence: for where they are seen, felt, and abhorred, there the light of life is shining; and once suspended in man's soul, this holy light hangs there as a witness that that soul is one of God's happy Jeshuruns, and that in spite of all, "underneath are the everlasting arms."

Some will be impatient at my constant reference to these things, but let the strong learn to bear with the weak. I have been through so many desperate campaigns in these matters, that I know, and must speak freely of those things which I know will stumble, and often cause the young recruit to halt in the battle. Of course professors who know nothing of the power of the light of life within, will reject it altogether. For that I am quite prepared: few, however, of this class will have had patience to come thus far with me in travelling over Jeshurun's glories.

Let me then remark here, my brother, that although the light in itself changes not, yet owing to mists which rise up in the chamber of death, its brightness is often obscured. Indeed, such clouds sometimes, and earthly matters at others, come between the spiritual vision and the lamp of life, that its flame is scarcely discoverable at all. This is a night season with thee, and it is common at such times, for a drowsiness of soul to come on, in which state, thou wilt find the horrid reptiles creeping near to thee again! Yes, sometimes before thou art aware of thy danger, one of the deadly vipers will be nestling in thy very bosom again. In such cases, how blessed is the truth, "He that keepeth Israel, neither slumbers nor sleeps!" He blows away the mist, up springs the light again, dispelling the

thick clouds, awaking from slumber; like another Sampson rising from the lap of Delilah, thou goest forth to shake thyself: but what is the horror of thy poor broken spirit when thou discovereth thy condition! Ah, many are the wounds and stings gotten under these circumstances; and the language of the child of God is that of the Psalmist, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped!" And slipped they would, never to stand again, but there hangs the holy, blessed, pure, and glorious lamp! all praises to His glorious name,

"He sees us when we see not Him, And always hears our cry!"

In Him we always triumph—and to be embraced by his golden rays is to be in Him, children of the light. He is ever full of all needed grace. He stands fast, immovably, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, however much we may totter and slip. In Him we must, we shall, at last prevail, for "Grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life."

Come, my brother, let us turn again to Jeshurun, and gaze upon

him in the light of the lamp!

It is in this light alone he can read so as to steer by his glorious compass. It is the Spirit of this light who whispers the all-confirming AMEN! as he runs over the vast blessedness connected with the everlasting arm of his redemption! Let us go with him over a few of these, which are all folded up in sweet security as he reposes in this matchless arm; and all connected with his light.

By this light Jeshurun first discovers that he is a son of God! and this discovery opens up in his wondering mind his union to

Christ.

At the next step he perceives that the very light itself is suspended where it is, because the everlasting love of the Father was fixed upon him as an adopted son in covenant before time began. Hence he learns that the power put forth by the precious light in drawing him towards itself, every moment, with a growing influence; which now becomes a testimony of the eternity of the Father's love towards him, and explains to him those memorable words, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3.) But he perceives that it is as an adopted son the Father ever loved him. Thus then he sits down in the power of this light, and contemplates his compass card: going over every point.

Faith argues thus, the Father loves me in Christ as his own chosen and adopted child! Here then is my unchanging Relation-

ship. Unbelief sighs and replies, but I am in this filthy sepulchre a poor guilty sinner in myself. True, answers Faith, but behold the blessedness! How readest thou? what is the next point in thy compass? It is Reconciliation! What says the Spirit? "God was in Christ"—because He loved you with an everlasting love, and was related unto you in covenant-" RECONCILING you unto himself!" Here, as is the relationship, so is the reconciliation exactly coinciding in extent. But how was Jehovah reconciling his adopted children to himself? "Not imputing their trespasses TO THEM." Thus arises the next point in Jeshurun's compass. For since their trespasses were not imputed to them, to whom were they imputed? The non-imputation of their sins to the children, involves in it the conclusion which the Holy Ghost by the apostle states in connection with this glorious declaration of divine truth, namely, "For he hath made him to be sin for us" (2 Cor. v. 21). Christ is here declared to be made sin for his church. How was this done? By imputation! As our surety He became the debtor. Divine justice seized upon him as such. And here we have another glorious line of blessedness, arising from the same centre and terminating within the same circle, coinciding in extent with relationship, in the amount of debt that is made to meet upon the Surety, and therefore, when the great Sacrifice cried, "It is finished;" in answer to the question "What is finished?" The prophet declares, for the eternal consolation of all God's Jeshuruns. He hath "finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness." Here is eternal SATISFACTION! The law is magnified, justice content, yea more, justice becomes the sinner's friend!

Again we must pause.

[&]quot;The peace of God rule in your hearts." Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN!

(No. 9.)

"The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy help, and who is the Sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut, xxxiii. 27—29.

ALTHOUGH we have dwelt somewhat lengthily upon the glorious arm of Jeshurun's ETERNAL REDEMPTION, we cannot proceed without referring once more to it, and to the compass-card mentioned in a previous lecture in connection therewith.

It is, my beloved brother, as the Lamp of Life—Christ formed in your heart the hope of glory—shines and brightens, you are enabled to measure and compare spiritual things with spiritual, and so to discover the blessed coincidence of each royal line that flows out from the one unchangeable centre; as you trace them down, on either side of the compass-card, from ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP, given to us in Christ in Covenant, as we were bound up in the bundle of life, with the Lord our God by predestination, before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 3—5), to the end or design of all, namely, the ETERNAL GLORIFICATION of the one adopted family, as "The Bride, The Lamb's Wife."

If this BELATIONSHIP was formed in covenant before time—and who that reverences God's word dares deny that it was?—that it might be developed in time; and to which end, each person in the Holy Trinity in Unity undertook, by covenant engagement, at the ratification thereof, a special office, in which by oath He bound Himself to bring about the ultimate accomplishment of the grand design, on behalf of each individual of this royal family; upon what a base of untouchable security do the sure mercies of Jeshurun rest in The Gospel Cottage Lectures, No. 32.

And at the same time, what unutterable importance does the question assume? "Am I a partaker of this eternal relationship?"

It is as this question returns again and again with growing weight and solemnity upon the soul, that a knowledge of the double property of the shining of the lamp of life in the heart becomes so exceedingly precious; because it becomes our EVER-PRESENT WIT-MESS, that we stand in this eternal relationship with Jehovah. faith needs to be confirmed in this knowledge, and this confirmation proceeds generally by slow steps, for "He that believeth shall not make haste." As, however, we get some degree of confirmation, we find the two properties of the light working together. Thus, while on the one hand, it discovers to us the loathsome working of the "Old man with his deeds," which, the more he sees and feels, the living child of God MUST ABHOR, and, with unceasing energy, deny and "put off." Yet, on the other hand, as faith gains a little strength, after many a pang of bitter grief on account of the power of the law of sin, he sits down, and in the same divine light, tells over his true riches! Then, how does the soul rejoice, that the living lamp is there; for, every living ray that streams down into his broken and contrite heart, sweetly whispers to him, "All are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Behold, then, once more, my living brother, justice is now on our side! ETERNAL REDEMPTION cannot exist unless justice has received ETERNAL SATISFACTION! Well may the prophet exultingly shout, as he stands at the foot of the cross, and beholds the close of the wonderful scene, and hears the precious voice of dying love, cry once and for ever, "It is finished!" "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand, double for all her sins." Not only ETERNAL REDEMPTION, but now evermore joining hands for the endless security of Jeshurun, comes forth the other glorious arm—EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS!

Oh, Jeshurun! what are a few more days to be spent in the chamber of death, compared with God's eternally glorious now? The Lord help thee to turn aside a moment in sweet communion and fellowship, and contemplate thy spotless royal robe! and forget not, it is now thy robe. The Father now beholds thee clothed in it. It is an eternal arm of unfailing strength, and underneath ARE—not shall, or may be, no, but ARE—the EVERLASTING ARMS! "The king's daughter is all-glorious within; her raiment is of wrought gold!"

Spring up thou bright and holy Light! Shine strongly! Let me gaze upon thee, my ever-glorious Sun! until basking in thy rich and holy rays, I may so drink in the eternal treasures of thy heavenly light, that I may forget my poverty and remember my misery no more!

Fix there thy gaze, my brother! By the fulness of that light alone, thou mayest measure all. See now the glory of thy stand-Thy debt is for ever paid. But thy blessedness does not stop here. It must be DOUBLED to make the bounty of Jehovah's grace complete! Read the full testimony of thy Father's love! Not because of anything either found in thee, or wrought in thee, but because it pleased Jehovah to make you his child. All flows down to thee, through the channel of relationship! and therefore John exclaims in holy ecstacy, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" But read the full testimony of a Father's love. "For HE hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the BIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM" (2 Cor. v. 21). But mark, my brother, what stands in connection with this boundless love act of our covenant God! Why did He thus magnify his unfathomable love? Behold the fulness of thy sure abiding in the unfailing everlasting arms. It was to RECONCILE thee to Himself! He was thy Father! Thou hadst fallen into sin, death, and misery! He could not so tarnish his glory, as to take thee, defiled and loathsome as thou hadst become by sin, into his bosom! but He could. -Oh, wonder! that shall eternally outmatch thy praises!—He could, for the love that He bore to thee, give up, in thy stead, his own eternally well-beloved Son, his only-begotten! and make Him to be sin-loathsome as it is-for thee! that He might reconcile thee to Himself; as it is written, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." -This can only refer to God's Jeshurun—that little world within the world which lieth in the wicked one; for, if God had imputed all the sin of all the world to Christ, and Christ had put it away by the sacrifice of Himself, there could remain none to condemn those who believe not.—But then, mark again, that which follows out of, or flows down to thee, my brother, at the next step. If thus standing in unalterable relationship, if thus because of this relationship, thou art REDEEMED and made RIGHTEOUS, even with the righteousness of God, and thereby RECONCILED to God by the death of his Son, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that thou standest in Christ, ETERNALLY JUSTIFIED. Yes, "Justified from all things, now."

Oh, my brother, where are we living, daily? The lamp of life exposes our uncomeliness in self, it is true: but it is our witness, that all these eternally royal blessings are our own. Ours, by a title—which Satan, death, or hell can never frustrate or disannul. Yea, more, the very knowledge we have of the presence of the viper, and the distress we feel on account of it, if rightly weighed in the unerring balances of the sanctuary, proves beyond a question, that we are now, in our new nature, holy as the Holy One! and therefore passed over from death into life, and can never more come into condemnation: being justified from all things now! How sad is it, that God's royal family should be living in such a degradedly low place, daily writing bitter things against themselves, instead of calculating and dwelling upon their blessedness as it is thus folded up, and made eternally secure in the Person of our most glorious Christ. This, however, must be the sad lot of God's children so long as they continue to draw their inferences from that which the light of life discovers of the "law of sin in the members," instead of living by the blessed compass, tracing all up to divine relationship, and thus living daily out of self in its workings, in the sweet simplicity which is in Christ Jesus.

There are three more points in our compass, to which we must turn for a moment before we pass on; each one of which my brother, if rightly weighed, becomes ten million-times more precious as thy present condition in this horrid sepulchre, which Paul calls, "The body of this death" (Rom. vii. 24), proves to thee daily more

and more disgusting.

Again mark, the light is come, or thou couldst not know a single atom about the true condition of the body of death! The light is come, or thou wouldst be at this moment, fondly embracing some religious scorpion and worshipping that! But, since the light of life is come indeed! what does it prove? No less than thy RELATION-SHIP! It is the APPLICATION by the Holy Ghost, according to covenant oath, made on thy behalf before time, of all that flows to thee, and has been done for thee, yea, eternally finished for thee, in, and by Christ! The Lord read into thy heart, that precious testimony (Gal. iv. 6). Here is Almighty application! "Because ve are sons. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, "ABBA, FATHER!" What is the effect? Hast thou ever heard the dear voice of covenant mercy, saving, "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, MY FATHER, thou art the guide of my mouth" (Jer. iii. 4)? Oh, say you that is what I want to make me happy and content. I want to go to Jehovah as my Father. By faith to see and know Him, that I may evermore love Him as such. When in sweet assurance, I can look up to Him, and call Him my Father, I shall be satisfied.

But why all this? Can you see your sad condition, misery in self, and lost condition by nature? You will say, Yes, indeed, and deeply feel and deplore it too! But, how? You cannot deny that the Light is come? You can but hope so? Then, why was it sent? How readest thou once more? "Because ye are sons!" Because of eternal relationship! Oh to learn the simple compass well! But here, mark again, my brother; it does not read, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son unto your hearts, CAUSING YOU to cry, Abba, Father." No, but it is "the Spirit of his Son CRYING."

Now, let us look for a few moments, at the blessed way by which this application by the Holy Spirit is carried on. The scorpion and the viper approach as if they would annihilate thee; thou art terrified! thine eye is turned up to the light, and though many a tear may tremble there, and dismay may fill thy soul, yet, what is the substance of the cry contained in that imploring look? Do you not see the simplicity of the precious truth? It is because the Light of Life is there thou art able to see thy need of help, and to feel thine own utter weakness. Then thou art a living child. Relationship is hereby manifested!

A new-born babe does not begin to speak as soon as it begins to feel the thousand NEEDS which it has brought with it into its new state of existence. But what does the little babe? It cries, it moans, it looks, it turns its restless little head upon the bosom of love! What does all this say? Abba! Abba! Abba! Does the tender mother need an interpreter? Does she not fully undertand the language of her babe? "O fools and slow of heart to believe!" But it comes to this; we want to be able to give a lusty shout and cry, Abba Father, without a feeling of doubt. This is not the way. It is the Spirit of the Son crying in our crushed and broken hearts for help against our inward foes, moment by moment; for food to sustain us; for love to warm and comfort us; for peace to still our storms; for health to cure our diseases; for blood to cleanse us; and for the precious robe of spotless righteousness to cover and adorn us. Yes, and all praise to our divine Teacher and Comforter, as the lamp burns up higher and brighter, we shall begin to understand a little better the nature, the simplicity, and the power of this living cry. Thus" Abba, Father! Lord we call thee, Hallow'd name from day to day; 'Tis thy children's right to know thee, None but children Abba say. Abba's love first gave us being, When in Christ, in that vast plan; Abba chose the church in Jesus, Long before the world began. In the plan himself had formed, Ere, like sheep, we went astray; They, (said God), shall call me Father, Nor from me shall turn away. And the richest stores of pardon, God sets forth through Christ his Son With his Spirit's grace to guide us; Safe to bring his children home. Abba, Father! makes all certain Both by word, by oath, and blood; Abba saith, they are my people, And they say—the Lord's my God. Hence through all our changing seasons, Trouble, sorrow, sickness, woe; Nothing changes God's affection, Abba's love will bring us through !"

This would be Jeshurun's song all through his pilgrimage, could he live in simple child-like dependence for ALL FITNESS and ALL FEELING on the boundless bounty of Abba Father! But alas! we live too much as though his glory depended on our faithfulness and zeal. It shall, however, at last prove true that "his glory will He not give to another!"

It is by constant practice that sailors learn to "box their compass," and Zion's mariners must expect to make many mistakes before they can go over every point in theirs without hesitating. Still it is a good thing to have the heart well established in grace and truth.

Another glorious point is INTERCESSION. Hence again you will see, my brother, how sweetly the whole circle is fitted together. What! Has Christ ever failed in a single instance wherein He has undertaken to plead a sinner's cause? Impossible!

His honour is engaged to save,

The meanest of his sheep;
ALL that his heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep!

Again, relationship stands as the measure of Christ's intercession. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which

thou hast given me: for they are thine; and all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them!" What can be more simple? What can be more blessed? If we have the Spirit's witness in our hearts that we are God's living children? Again unbelief starts up. Ah, there is the point! If I am a child? Well look then once more. The living feeling of spiritual NEED is the sure token. Thou art daily, by the shining of the living lamp in thy soul, discovering the emptiness of thy prayers! Indeed. does it not often seem as though there was more of real prayer in the deep sigh and hearty groan which often follows thy amen, because thou feelest that thou art not able to pray in the Spirit, than in all the words thou hast uttered? I know it is so. What makes the difference between thy case and that of self-satisfied persons who having prayed according to custom and duty, rise from their knees pleased with themselves and their prayers? Spiritual life! Dead prayers or dead worship will not satisfy thee. "God is a Spirit. and they who worship Him, must worship him in Spirit and in truth," which no man can do until he is born again from above: until he is called by grace; until he is called out of darkness into God's marvellous light; in short, until the lamp of eternally living light is hung up in his chamber of death. Then, prayer becomes a matter of deepest concern to that child of God! How often does he go back and begin again and again, with many a cry and a groan for help, because like the fool's eyes, his thoughts have wandered to the ends of the earth. How often does he leave the throne of grace with a sorry heart and an aching bosom; with the accuser of the brethren at his right hand to resist him, pointing at his miserable attempts at prayer! Ah, my brother, a living child of God, a living Jeshurun, needs the everlasting arms to keep him from sinking into despair, when in any point of view he contemplates himself after the flesh, as the living light discovers himself to himself! But at this very point, when we are ready to sink into despair, comes in the sweet testimony and teaching of the Holy Comforter to our aid. And thus in an especial way with reference to our prayers. How precious is the whisper of the Remembrancer, as he pours into our wounded heart the sweet balm of his Almighty consolations! "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities!" But where is our High-priest? Who is our High-priest? He is ever before the throne on our BEHALF! And not only so, He is our own glorious Head; in whom we live; by whom we live; for whom we live; and, to crown the whole, "The head cannot say

to the feet, I have no need of thee." What then? Though we are distracted in our attempts at prayer, our temporal and eternal success remains unaffected thereby, for it is not what we say, nor the way in which we breathe it forth that carries power in it. It is the unalterable truth in its blessedness, that because He lives; because He pleads; because He has undertaken all for us, we must succeed! "For this glorious Lord Jesus Christ, because He coutinueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood! wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost (who shall measure God's uttermost?) that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 24.)

But, for whom doth He make intercession? Here is Jeshurun's blessedness, folded up in Jehovah's eternal "DOUBLE" (Isa. xl. 2.) in the everlasting arms of ETERNAL REDEMPTION and EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS coinciding in extent, that nothing should fail. Turning on the same centre of love and union. Because by relationship he is a son, therefore God was in Christ reconciling him unto Himself not imputing his transgressions to Him, but by Imputation making Christ to be sin for him; then, that full satisfaction, may be made for all the sins of all the sheep, Jehovah, beholding the mighty debt upon the head of the Surety, cried, "Awake O sword, against my shepherd and against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd."

"Payment He cannot twice demand First, at my bleeding Surety's hand, And then again at mine!"

But since eternal redemption and everlasting righteousness go hand in hand, the Shepherd having finished the one, and given to his sheep the other, eternal Justification follows as a necessary consequence. And then, to crown the whole, Jesus Himself is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give through the Spirit, personal application of all his purchased blessings, to all his purchased people, and Himself ever lives to carry out the vast plan, to administer to his own will, to make intercession for his own redeemed 1 Hence, we conclude, if one line in the compass be universal, so are all. Let God be true! but Judas was a son of perdition, therefore, he could not be a son of God's adoption. Relationship was wanting in his case, and therefore all the rest.

I add. "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." (Acts v. 39).

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No. 10.)

"The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

With what simplicity and sweetness would you pour out of your troubled heart all your sorrows morning by morning, my brother beloved, could you but see how the case really stands with regard to thy blessedness in the everlasting arms of redemption and righteousness. All is folded up there in untouchable security, as to your ultimately prevailing over all that opposes you, "For greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world;" and in nothing is this more blessedly seen than in the intercession of our great High-Priest.

But once more, let us remark that by virtue of union to Him, thou art ever present in the mansions of thy Father, in the person of thine Advocate.

Art thou needy? Behold then, His intercession is co-extensive with all thy needs! It matters not how many or how great they may be, thou mayest have a thousand hard causes to plead every day, thine infinitely glorious, all eloquent, and ever successful Mediator is in court, EVER LIVING to make intercession for thee! is His office. It was for this very purpose, that He might whisper to every distracted Peter whom the devil is permitted to sift in his terrible sieve, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," that He was anointed to His holy office! The Lord help thee, my afflicted brother, to think upon thy Intercessor when thy heart is overflowing with sorrow! Thou art a child of light,—if thou seest thy need of Him to cleanse thee and purify thee.—Walk as a child of light! How is that? Go to Jesus thine Intercessor, "Casting all your CARE UPON HIM." You thus honour Him, magnify Him, worship Him! What though the vipers hiss within, and threaten thee? THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 33.

"Tell Him a brother seeks his love,
A brother's claims make known;
Jesus the name will not disprove,
Nor will the claims disown."

Could we but live as children of the light, we should discover that there is not a black hideous monster we have seen, or ever shall see, in our fleshly hearts, but has a voice, and each one calls upon us to fly to our Intercessor. The light shines, that thou mayest discover the things by which thou art infested, in order that thou mayest be brought to a knowledge, by ever present feeling of thy need, of thine adorable Intercessor. What does sickness of body say to thee? Does it say, sit down and mourn and die in thy misery? No, but the more malignant the disease, the louder does it cry out to thee, "Away! haste to the Physician!" Oh to learn these lessons well!

"He cannot fail! what are thy sins?
The cause He undertakes—He wins!"

But ah, has He undertaken my cause? The shining of the light, and the presence of the life, by which thy needs are seen and felt, I repeat, are the ever-present witnessing of the Spirit in thy soul, that thou art a son! What have these discoveries made needful for thy help? Is it not the cleansing blood of Christ? Yea, well then, what does the blessed Mediator plead? His own precious blood! Oh how sweetly does that living word from the pen of dear Mr. Hart chime in with the sorrows of such a needy soul as thine, my brother! I shall never forget with what divine power they once dropped into my soul from the lips of that venerable servant of Christ, William Gadsby.

"Then, while I make my secret moan, Upwards I cast my eyes, and see, Though I have nothing of my own, My treasure is immense in thee!

My treasure is thy precious blood! Fix there my heart!"

The Holy Comforter fix thy broken heart, my poor tempest-tossed brother, upon this precious "red line that never was known to fail." Then, in all simple confidence thou shalt be able to gaze with delight at the last point in the compass, namely, GLORIFICATION. This, again is found only in these everlasting arms of redemption and righteousness. For it was to this end Christ lay down his precious life, to redeem his covenant relations; to purchase his own eternally-betrothed one; His Father's chosen daughter, of whom He has declared, "Yea, I have loved thee with an ever-

lasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." It was to this end, that his Bride might be eternally with Him where He is, that she may behold and share in his glory, that He paid that countless sum of penal suffering, which was necessary before He could put away, or make an end of that sin, the curse and guilt of which had been transferred from her to Him, lifted off and away from the body, and caused to meet upon the Divine Head.

It is of the utmost importance to the comfortable establishment of thy soul, my brother, that this point be held fast. In our day the Christ of God is denied by thousands, who little think how deadly is the poison they imbibe, when they admit that wide-spreading notion that the sins of the mystical body of Christ are not to be looked upon in the light of a DEBT which was PAID IN FULL, to the last jot or tittle, by the sufferings, blood-shedding, and death of Christ, the Divine Head and Surety of that body. The reason why men so industriously endeavour to substitute another, or a variety of other schemes, for this one only simple and solid foundation for hope and consolation to a broken-hearted, Satan-buffeted, and sin-abhorring child of God, who is daily oppressed by the working of the law of sin in his members, is clearly this, they are determined at all hazards to hold fast the flesh-pleasing, but God-dishonouring doctrine of "universal redemption" in some one of its various shapes. But the glory of God in the glorification of the Bride of Jesus, is clearly the revealed end and fulness of the precious Gospel. The covenant union before time, and the living spiritual union in time, which ever has existed, and ever shall exist between Christ the Head and Husband, and his members the body and bride, bound Him to pay the debt contracted by his wife - bound Him to suffer the penalty due to his body on account of its sin. Being one-eternally one -with his Church, the sin of the body became the sin of that wonderful mystic Person, made up of Head and members, whom Paul distinctly calls Christ! "For, as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so Also is Christ The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, THE HEAD TO THE FRET, I HAVE NO NEED OF YOU" (1 Cor. xii. 12). It was as the Head of his body Christ suffered. It was as the Head of his body, by virtue of union, Christ was made sin-not a sinner, but It was therefore as the Head of his body, "It pleased Jehovah to bruise him!" Yes, and on the same ground of strict penal justice—as I have before mentioned—that a thief who steals, or otherwise breaks the law with his hands, pays the penalty of his guilt, by receiving the punishment of a hundred lashes on his back! Paul clearly maintains this union as the foundation upon which the Gospel is preached, and moreover, Paul plainly adds, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8). He that believes not in Christ as He is revealed in the Gospel, believes not in THE CHRIST OF GOD! But in a Christ of man's invention, which is to DENY THE CHRIST OF GOD! How solemn then becomes the testimony of Paul, and those who feel their minds rising in enmity against the necessary consequences of the eternal covenant mystical union existing between Christ and his Church, as Head and members, will do well to look to their spiri-For, "No man can say that Jesus is the tual anchorage. LORD, BUT BY THE HOLY GHOST." I confess it often stirs my soul within me, when I meet those light-hearted, happy, and often sincere and zealous persons, so far as their religious system carries them: who float on the surface of our religious society, knowing how easy it is for Satan to deceive the carnal mind, and send his unconscious votaries post-haste to hell, with a religious lie in their right hand! Such think they believe in Christ: but talk to them about a daily bitter conflict, between the flesh and the Spirit, which causes a living child of God to groan, being burdened; and show them, moreover, that it is this which makes Christ and his great salvation, in all its fulness, freeness, and eternal security, so unutterably precious, and his person so divinely glorious; and you will see by the blank, unmeaning gaze with which they regard you, that they are total strangers to these living spiritual emotions; and if you press upon them the foundation doctrine of eternal graceunion relationship, in which every redeemed child of God has ever stood, "according to the good pleasure of the Father's will," and the probability is that their placid piety will give place to rage.

But here once more, and finally, we must refer to the compass-card. If eternal covenant grace-union, relationship, was the measure of the imputation, so also must it be of the satisfaction, so also of the reconciliation, so also of the justification, so also of the application, so also of the intercession, and so also of the glorification? What then follows? We are brought back to the momentous question—"Am I alive in Christ?" "Do I live Christ?" This, after all, is the great question, which once settled, proves to us that "All are your's, ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Cheer up then my travelling exercised brother; rightly examined by the blessed light of life; which, as thine abiding witness, Je-

hovah has suspended in the dark chamber of thy "body of death" (Rom. vii. 24,) every circumstance, even Satan's fiery darts, henceforth, terrific and bitter as it may be, shall bring thee ultimately to the contemplation of Jeshurun's glories! which are and must be eternally secure, as they are folded up in the everlasting arms. What! be content with a security less certain with regard to our eternal inheritance than satisfies men in reference to the investment of a little gold? Blessed be our covenant God, his care for his children is like himself.

" His love is as large as his power,
And neither knows measure nor end."

What are thy sinkings, but so many plunges in the sea of tribulation; to shake thee out of all self-help, that thou mayest find all thy salvation and all thy desire to be in the everlasting arms? When thou art tossed out of some vessel in which thou hadst been promising thyself some degree of comfort and peace—for He empties all his Jeshuruns from vessel to vessel—thou seemest like Jonah to fall out into the broad sea, and like him to come to the conclusion that thou art cast out of God's sight to perish! Still, fear not—

"When Jonah sauk beneath the wave, He thought to rise no more; But God prepared a fish to save, And bear him to the shore."

But all is to bring thee to the unfolding of another hidden blessedness laid up for thee in the everlasting arms.

It is, moreover, as we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that we come to understand how unfathomable and how glorious are those depths which are contained in those two final arms, which, while they lie under all, yet rise and encircle all, and out of which no Jeshurun can ever by any possible accident fall; but which will be our resting place still, when in ages to come we shall be ranging over the everlasting hills of eternal blessedness, where there shall be no more sin, no more devil, no more darkness, no more death; but where sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away. Then we shall feel and know a little of the fulness of that which is our grand stay and unchanging blessedness now, although we know so little about it, namely, EVERLASTING LOVE, and EVERLASTING CONSOLATION.

Come, my sorrowing brother; what, if after all thy hard fighting, it shall prove that this same love was the cause of all that has befallen thee, that thou mightest be brought thereby to prize above all things the overflowing of consolation! Where is it thy precious Christ, in all his glory and beauty, appears most grand and lovely to thee? Is it not when He is walking with thee and talking to thee in some fiery furnace? If he appeared, in the glory of his radient form, like the Son of God to the king, how infinitely overwhelming must have been the beauty of His person to the three persecuted children? Yes; the furnace is the place where Christ shines! and it is in the dark night of sorrow that the everlasting arms of His tender love are sweetest to a sin-burdened but sin-sick soul!

But let us not lose sight of the main blessedness of the question, which is the glory of the child of God. It is, that the arms are EVERLASTING! "Underneath are the everlasting arms." Oh glorious resting-place! Oh blessed arms! Not like the friendships of time, which at best die out and are dissolved, leaving a sting behind! But these are everlasting! How shall we in any degree form an estimate of them? As to duration, we can but wonder and adore; we can count nothing of its sum; but the knowledge of the duration gives to all, its abiding blessedness and value. As to their effects, however, the child of God even now is not a stranger. He knows their power by foretastes, although it be but for a few moments, now and then, as droppings gathered from the boundless ocean; they are sufficient to convey a taste of the eternal sweetness of the divine whole, and convey into his soul the true effects of the love of God, and of the precious consolation of the Spirit.

But where does the living child of God find these soul-animating consolations? Not by pouring over the scorpions, but by turning aside with Moses to contemplate the person and glory, grace and good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush! It is when the precious Lamp of Life burns brightly up, that for a little season, the soul is filled with living shining, which enables the otherwise gloomy child of God to see things clearly, to embrace the love that holds him fast, and to lie softly reposing on the paternal arm of manifested consolation. Then Abba, dear Father, flows out sweetly, and joy is added to peace in believing. Mr. Hart sweetly describes these heavenly moments thus:—

"When Jesus with his mighty love, Visits my troubled breast, My doubts subside, my fears remove, And I'm completely blest."

This is true consolation. It matters not what the circumstances are in which the soul is placed, either with regard to temporal

things or spiritual. The children of the bridechamber can but rejoice while the Bridegroom is with them. The moment the light springs up, consolation flows with it, and Jeshurun says, with good old Simeon, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" But patience must have its perfect working. Our new life is not a time life! We have begun our eternal course already, and each succeeding drop makes us long for, and press towards the eternal fountain head the more earnestly.

How glorious will be that moment to which we are rushing onward, in spite of all our impediments, with a speed for greater than we can appreciate, when awaking up out of a moment's falling asleep in death temporal, we open our eyes on the Lamb! and once and for ever plunge into and lose ourselves in the unutterable delights of that eternal ocean of unchanging love and consolations, which bear upon its bosom all the inestimable glories of Jeshurun!

The Holy Comforter stay thy wavering heart, my brother, upon the blessed truth, that the dimmest shining of the Light of Life in the dark and cloudy day, proves that these arms are as truly underneath thee now as they will be then. We are as securely enclosed in them now as we can be then, only with this difference, now our apprehension of the security and blessedness comes to us by faith; then we shall enter on the enjoyment by sight. But faith's report of the good land is a true one; and a cluster from Eschol, now and then, sharpens the appetite, and sweetens the bitters of the wilderness journey.

Thus, then, we have gazed with Moses, the man of God, as he stood on Pisgah, at the Refuge and the strong arms of Jeshurun's help! We have looked at His impregnable castle, and its keep! We have now briefly to survey those things which belong to this "inhabitant of the Rock." and of which Moses presents us with a catalogue.

Here we find, however, we must leave these things for a closing lecture, while we stop for a moment to ask dear little-faith a question.

Is it right, my brother, if you have but the least of the beginning of the knowledge revealed to the Lord's people by the shinings of the Lamp of Life, to be ever pertinaciously, yes, obstinately, returning to the old questions, as to how strong or how weak you are? As to how good, or how bad you are? How warm in your affections towards the Lord, or how cold and dull you are? How rich, or how poor you are? Listen to the account the Holy Ghost gives of the matter by Paul; "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, bath

shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Now mark, is it the "EARTHEN VESSEL" that you have to look at, and to draw your inferences from, or is it not rather "This

TREASURE?"

Be not alarmed, my brother, although some self-satisfied Pharisee should set his teeth, that he may do violence to his rancour, while he mutters "Antinomian!" do not quarrel with him, poor man; you and I should have been his companions, had not the glorious light shined in our hearts; therefore, not unto us, not unto us! we have not a stone to cast at our deceived neighbour!

But let us look soberly at the matter. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." If you have that fear in your heart, sin is the one thing that makes life bitter—I do not mean outward gross sin—but HEART-SIN. I must come again and again to this point. If you are not daily sensible of, and bitterly grieving over, fighting against, and flying from the viper in the flesh, there is reason to fear either that the Light of Life is not shining in your heart, or that it is so dim as to have left you for a season in "the land of the shadow of death" (Isa. ix. 2.); in which state sometimes, owing to the darkness which hides its deformity, the earthen vessel looks so pure and saint-like that the real and only treasure is almost forgotten.

But some will say, but I find a something in me that loves sin still. If I were always fighting against it, as you say, I should not be so much cast down as I am. Again, I answer, what do you mean by being cast down? is not this the very bitterness of which I speak? and which proves that you do not love him, but art ever crying, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe?" which is the hourly language of a new creature in Christ. There is a something in you that loves sin; it is the viper, the "Old man, which is crucified." But this is not thyself as a new creature in Christ The Lord help thee to live out of self, above the earthen vessel, rejoicing; not that it is there, but that thou art tormented by the evil which belongs to the law of sin. For this proves beyond a question that the fear of the Lord is in thee as a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Again, then, the Lord help thee to keep thy spiritual reckoning by thy knowledge of the unsearchable riches of Christ, for thou art a true Jeshurun, and all are your's!

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Amen.

THE GLORIES OF JESHURUN.

(No. 11.)

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii. 27—29.

It is the eternal unchangeable duration of that rich collection of blessings which are contained in Jeshurun's strong hold, which gives fulness and grandeur to the subject, above all others that can be dwelt upon in time, or to all eternity: especially since, Christ is all, and in them all!

We look first at the promised VICTORY! "And he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and say, Destroy them." We pass over the historical fulfilment of this literally in Israel's vic-

tories of old, and turn to its spiritual import.

We have already seen by the spiritual shining of the Lamp of Life, the multitudes of the Canaanites which infest the land; namely, the hearts of God's people. These are all collected into three great divisions, the world, the flesh, and the devil. These are all marshalled under one common standard, and that is, enmity against God. It matters not to what extent their tactics may be varied—Satan may appear as an angel of light—and the world become religious—this is their unvarying motto—enmity against God!

Now turn thine eyes to thine own dear camp, my troubled brother! lift up thine heart to-day as thou beholdest the banner that ever waves above the battlements of thy never-failing Refuge! Oh how blessed is the realization of it in the midst of the battle! When THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURES, No. 34.

the enemy cometh in like a flood, then to look up and see its precious, glorious, golden letters like a living flame shining upon the dear banner! What if black HATRED be stamped upon the flag of thine enemy? Let not that cause thee a sigh. But behold the Royal Banner of Zion! crimsoned indeed with the blood of our noble Captain, but embroidered with one shining word, which contains in its rich properties, the ruling power by which every battle is fought, and every enemy driven off. What! does it already begin to vibrate on some of the secret chords of thy timid heart, my feeble brother?

"It gives courage to worms, And conduct to fools!"

It will make a "Good soldier" of thee!

"Fear not th' infernal powers, Now count the migh'y odds, The battle is not yours, But Israel's faithful God's."

Thou hast felt a little of the power of the four shining letters, and they shall inspire thee unto the end. "And His banner over me was LOVE!" Here faith finds all her victories. For "Faith worketh by love." "This is the victory that overcometh the world. even our faith." "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;" and there is no overcoming testimony without faith, nor faith without love, nor love without blood. Now, beloved, this just suits thy case; thou art a poor sinner, and needest blood. Thou art desolate in thyself, and friendless, and needest love to comfort thee. Here, in this sweet item in Jeshurun's glories, all is provided, love floats aloft upon thy banner, the mighty conqueror is in the field; He drives out by his presence whatever enemy would oppose, and while thou art looking with tearful eye to Him, He turns upon all that would pursue thee to harrow up thy soul, and says—as the word may be rendered here—"PLRISH!" But mark, it is His work, and not thine. shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say (to them) Perish!"

Yes, and every enemy shall perish! How does my heart leap with joy when the precious truth flows in with sweet power to captivate my soul, that, very soon, I shall meet my glorious Deliverer on the brink of the Jordan, and while He raises me up on to His dear bosom, to rest there for ever! He shall thrust down my pursurers—who will, I know, be upon my heels until I step into the river—and shall shout to them with all the majestic triumph of

omnipotent power—Perish! my weary brother! this is no vain fancy; yet a few more struggles, and you shall see the victory complete. What! afraid to step into Jordan? Fear not! thou shalt find it a sweet sleep! Thy Jesus has already swallowed up death in victory. Therefore that enemy, like all the rest, shall prove at last to be thy friend.

Nevertheless, these enemies are often thrust out now. The welcome visits of Jesus compel them to leave the field, while we go

forth in the dances of them that make merry.

It is at such seasons we find the next item in Jeshurun's glories sweetly fulfilled, "Israel then." When? At such blessed moments, when by the victory of faith, and the shining of the Lamp in its glory, in a manifestation of the love of Jesus in the heart, we perceive our standing in completeness in Him, and the security of our resting in the arms everlasting! "Then," in the Person of our revealed Christ, we "dwell," or lay down, or rest, or abide—either rendering is blessed, and all may be included in the sense of the

passage-"in safety alone."

It is to enter into rest—to keep sabbath—by believing; to cease from our own works, as God did from His; to cease from reckoning, in any way, either by good or bad works of our own, but to reckon, whatever may be going on within or without, that although the viper stings, the scorpion threatens, yet that "we are dead in-DEED unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ having died for our sins, past, present, and to come, He has put them away so far, and so eternally, that "when they are sought for there shall be none." Now it is thy privilege, my brother, to dwell, to lay thyself down here, and whatever may have been thy toils and labour, to come to this precious resting place, and listen to the God of Jeshurun, as he cries into thy weary heart, "Come UNTO ME all ye that LABOUR and are heavy laden [Here is the qualification, it is to the labouring, striving, toiling, crushed, broken spirited, heavy laden child of God-yes, and to ALL such he cries] And I will give you rest!" Oh how precious is the dear experience of this rest! It is worth passing through a hell upon earth to find it, and many of God's dear people have never been able to find this assured, abiding, and most glorious rest, until by some most terrific circumstances they have been brought to say, "Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice." Yes, and not once in their life only, but it is done again and again; only with this difference, when once a child of God has been brought by the ministry of the Spirit, to lay down in Christ, he does not get back again under

the yoke of Moses; he knows now that into whatever captivities he may fall, he shall no more return into Egyptian bondage—he will no more seek to save himself by his own doings; he knows now, that in Christ alone he can find righteousness and strength; and therefore, but one point occupies his attention, and that one is the Person of Christ; for now he knows by experience the virtue there is in Him, therefore his cry, though crushed down under a mountain in his feelings, is, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole!"

But they shall dwell here in "safety," that is, as the hand of faith grows, they shall be able to grasp the big promise. Little babes have but very small power in their grasp, but the "young men" lay hold with a firm grip, like Jacob in his extremity, when he cried out, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me! Not that our safety depends upon the strength of our faith; but the word here contains in it this meaning, "Israel then shall dwell trusting in fearless confidence." It is when thus taught by the Spirit, first, that we are in the everlasting arms, and then, what those arms contain for our blessedness, that safety is developed in experience. And I must add, my brother, the stronger thy hand grows, be upon the look out for enemies proportioned in strength. Thou shalt have no faith to spare! Still it is blessed to grow.

But this dwelling in safety is to be "alone:" and this again contains three senses. First, separate—a circumcised people, cut off from all that belongs to Adam earthy; vessels separated for holy Secondly, sanctified, made holy, fitted for honour, fitted for the Master's use; "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise." This is as we are "new creatures: "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." This, with all that belongs to Jeshurun after the Spirit, is wholly distinct from what he is in the flesh. But thirdly, it is unmolested, however much Satan may buffet and torment thee, my brother, so that thou art a daily witness of the truth, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." Nevertheless do not stop here; "A stranger doth not intermeddle-is not interwoven-with thy joys." Satan and the "old Adam man" has neither part or lot in Jeshurun's glories! They may, and sadly they do, mar our comforts; but our eternal riches, our spotless robe, our divine beauty-matchless even among the angelic host—is as far above the reach of those two allied strangers, Satan and the old man, as Christ himself. All the works of the flesh are dead works; and our mercy stands in this abiding distinction, that all the works of the new creature are wrought in us by God himself, "who worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure;" and it is impossible that the one, which is all sin, and the other, which is all holiness, can be interwoven together. No, blessed be God that He has so divinely ordered it, that Jeshurun's "fat" (Deut. xxxii. 15), can never mix with, or mar, the pure water of life! But at all times "he dwells," as a new creature, "in safety alone:" which brings us to look at the next item in the rich catalogue.

What a PROVISION! "The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew."

The word here rendered "fountain," means also the eye, so that the passage may be read either, the fountain of Jacob, or the eye of Jacob. If the fountain, then the offspring, the family of Jeshurun, the Church of Christ. If the eye, then the faith of Jeshurun shall be upon "Immanuel's land," the person and fulness of Christ. Either reading is blessed; for here is our rest and our refreshing; here is our dwelling place, and the precious object of faith. Nor shall there ever be a change here; our mode of dwelling will change, inasmuch as faith will give place to sight. But his glorious person is now, and shall be eternally the one blessed object.

How sweet is the truth to the renewed mind. He is our corn and our wine-" My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood drink indeed!" Christ calls himself "a corn of wheat" (John xii. 24); and how blessedly does He set forth thereby our union to Hrm, and LIFE IN HIM. "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." How? by being "sown in dishonour—in a sense—but raised in glory." Here, Jeshurun, is thy fountain! but mark, how blessedly thou hast THY BEING in Him." "The fountain of Jacob shall BE-exist-live." Amen, amen. "I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Where is thy root. my brother? Thou art a little grain of wheat! Behold thy oneness with thy root! The Lord help thee to sit down and contemplate thy root! The eye of Jacob shall be upon this land of corn, until realizing the glorious truth in its fulness, the little grain of wheat, blown about by rude winds though he be, "with open face—the scales of unbelief gone, the legal vail, and the napkin about the head taken away—beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord—and the woman is the glory of the man, the Church is the glory of Christ—are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The Lord bless thee, my brother. with such a dissolving view of thyself in Christ; and thou wilt then

be content with such things as thou hast. This, moreover, will open to thee another step in the glories of Jeshurun. As a new creature, I am a corn of wheat! But I am sprung up out of the root of Jesse! Partaking of the same nature, living on the same life, and bearing the same image! Therefore, after all my doubts and fears, or whatever may have happened while I have been growing up in Him my living root, I shall "have boldness in the day of judgment! Because as He is, so are we in this world!"

Again, how blessed is it to observe, that it is thus a land of corn, and it is also a land of wine. What are the rich stores that are opened in the banquetting-house? What especially dost thou need, my brother, when the Holy Comforter taketh thee by the hand, and leadeth thee under the banner of love? He finds thee groaning in misery over thy condition as a sinner; He leads thee under the banner, and opens to thee the power and the preciousness of the blood of Christ! A deep draught of all this all-subduing cup, will make Jeshurun forget his own poverty, and remember his misery no more. He now can shout with divine delight—

" I'm rich to all intents of bliss, Since thou, oh Christ, art mine!"

and yet in himself a miserable, penniless beggar still!

"Also his heavens shall drop down dew." "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew!" Here is the whole teaching and ministry of the Spirit, as He brings up the noble family to a knowledge of the "Fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." Christ personally, being ALL, is Jeshurun's heaven; but he must know Him before he can delight in Him; and it is by the distilling of his sweet speech in the broken heart, that we learn to know his voice, and follow Him. But how does it come? in high-flying frames and feelings. No: but it is at night. sweet teachings are in the dark, in the midst of sorrow and anguish. The idols are being taken away; the Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and Benjamin must follow! The lily of the valley droops its drenched head, and many are the drops that water its green couch, as it lies weeping in sadness and impenetrable gloom. Can it be love that is teaching such bitter lessons? Wait! The morning star appears! Hope sheds a ray among the droppings of the night. Yes, it is love. But behold, the glorious sun arises! Look at the dew-drops now! How changed the scene! Each pure and precious distillation of the night, as it trembles in the morning breeze, bears upon its silver bosom the image of the mighty Lord of day! Each little dew-drop reflects a perfect sun! and whispers to the drooping lily, Yes, all is love! and "Christ is All and IN ALL!"

What then shall we say to these things? Can we do better than take our harps to-night, and join with Moses the man of God, as he strikes forth in his dying chorus, "Happy art thou, O Israel?" Happy in prosperity; happy in adversity; because "all things shall work together for Jeshurun's good." Happy in tribulation; because "tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." Happy in life; because "To me to live is Christ." Happy in death; because "to

die is gain!"

Oh, Jeshurun! "Who is like unto thee?" Dost thou start at the question? Thou art forgetting thy new creatureship! Thou art looking again at thy black self! There, indeed, thou art uncomely as a fiend! But turn thy back upon thyself a moment, and then, forgetting the things which are behind, look once more at thy portrait in the mirror! The highest angel in glory is not like unto thee! Couldst thou see the grand scene as they see it, even now, thou wouldst not be so much taken up about the little bubble of a thing called time, as thou art. Couldst thou see the grand procession as it is now moving onward to the closing-up of things temporal, thou wouldst behold thyself as an eternal prince, carried onward in grandeur and glory, safely folded in the everlasting arms, while angels desire to look into the wonderful scene, and catch a glimpse of the blessedness and beauty which are thine eternal property therein, that they may add another glorious strain to their hallelujah chorus!

Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by Jehovah? Who is like thee in value?

"Saints raise your expectations high, Hope all that heaven has good; Think what the blood of Christ can buy, INVALUABLE BLOOD!"

Look at the true state of the case. Thy house may be burned down, thou canst build another. Thy servants may perish, thou canst hire more. But what of thy wife, thy children? they are part of thyself. What is the universe itself, but the house of Jehovah? What the innumerable company of angels, but the servants of the one family "sent forth to minister?" The same word which called probably millions of worlds into being, can, and perhaps will, after they are "folded together"—crumpled up like a tissue web—again speak, and it shall be done! But where, then, shall Jeshurun be? O people, saved by Jehovah! But why saved? That then, the mighty God surrounded by his children—that then, the eternal

Bridegroom seated in immeasurable glory by his Bride—may go forth in new, and grand, and joyous acts of love and wisdom, grace and power, to magnify and get eternal glory to Himself. This is

thy destiny, O Jeshurun!

But mark again, thou art still in the wilderness, though now for a season, at Pisgah. Fear not the clash of arms; listen to another strain in the rich chorus. Jehovah is thy helping Shield! He shields thee by the hand of his power, while He helps thee by the hand of his love! He removes all evil, and brings thee all good. Yea, more, although thou art often terrified by the roaring lion, He shall nerve thee with strength to slay him, and then bring thee back to feast thee upon honey from the carcase.

Jehovah is the Sword of thy excellency! or thy magnificent, thy sublime Sword. Not only to slay thine enemies, but as thy Sword of state. Thou art a king, beloved Jeshurun! thy coronation-procession is already formed. Behold the mystery, Jehovah-Jesus is thy Sword of state. But coronations have another sword; a sword mercy, a sword without a point! In Jehovah-Jesus look for thy sword of mercy too. It was once a Sword of justice! Jehovah cried awake! It was plunged into the heart of thy Shepherd, and there it lost its point for ever! Henceforth it is thy Sword of mercy. Oh Jeshurun, who is like to thee?

One more triumphant note, and I have done. A promise! The Lord help thee, my feeble brother, to join with hearty joy! Thine enemies! Who are they? That fawning serpent; that jaundiced unbelief; that vain and empty carnal reason; with all their prate, vain glory, vaunting insolence and vapouring, shall be found liars unto thee; and with thy triumphant foot upon their necks, thou shalt tread upon their high places, and sing, "Unto Him who hath loved us, and washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests to God and our Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

THE MAN OF SORROWS!

(No. 1.)

"A man of sorrows."—Isa. liii. 3.

The apostle Paul in that most precious chapter, the third of his Epistle to the Philippians, makes fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, one of the immediate and inestimable links in the chain of spiritual experience, which arises out of a knowledge of Him. Nor can it be too earnestly dwelt upon, considering with what emphasis the apostle speaks of these things; compared with which he could treat all other things with sublime contempt. And every child of God still, who is travelling in the same footsteps, animated by the same life, and guided by the same Spirit, shall find time-things, of whatever kind, spoiled to him, just in proportion as he grows in this divine knowledge of Christ; experiencing thereby the power of his resurrection, and walking therein in the daily fellowship of his sufferings.

Be it, however, borne at all times in mind by the Lord's peculiar people, that all this can only exist, and be in the least degree apprehended, where there is SPIRITUAL LIFE. And it is by ever keeping this truth in view, we shall be preserved from making many soul-perplexing mistakes respecting the development of these things

in their living spirituality in the soul.

Paul himself had to learn these deep lessons in the living experience of them, step by step in the dark valley of Achor. the mount, or rather "caught up to the third heaven," he learned some unutterably blessed things concerning the person and glory of Christ; but it was afterward, when torn by the thorn in his flesh, and groaning being intensely burdened by the fruits thereof, he learned in his own personal experience, to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, which alone could lift him up out of sin, self, and misery, and cause him to triumph in the flowings of the fulness of all grace in Christ, although the thorn remained. I cannot but conclude that Paul, like the Lord's dear ones now, stood amazed, that after all the great things which had been shown to him in vision, and revealed to him by the Spirit, he should find his flesh, that is, the law of sin in his members, the same abominable thing it ever was: still subject to the same thorns—the same besetments—as ever, and therefore, himself, as a new creature, daily subjected to the buffeting of the vigilant and malicious accuser of the brethren; whose delight it is, first, to thrust home some horrid thorn, and then to rush in upon the prostrate soul with his fiendish THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 35.

"Ah! ah! so would we have it!" "Where is now your God?" None but God's living children know what these fierce conflicts mean. And they often, after all their knowledge, are so utterly perplexed by the suddenness and power of these onsets, as to sink into such confusion thereby, that for awhile they look upon all as a wreck. But how marvellous is the wisdom of our covenant Guide! By these things, which crush them to death in themselves, do men live, and in these is manifested and brought to light the life of the Spirit. By these things we learn and prove that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." But it is especially by these things that a new creature in Christ Jesus is brought to have fellowship with Him in his sufferings.

Christ was emphatically "The Man of sorrows." The circumstances of the case were such, as we shall see, that no other person could possibly become subject to the same amount of sorrow. This will appear if we look,

First, at the causes of his sorrow. And these appear during his life to have been chiefly two. The holiness of his nature; and the divine knowledge He had, by which He was able in anticipation to realize his vassion.

Christ was the Father's comment upon sin. He sent the Son of his love "in the likeness of sinful flesh." "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and [in the perfection of his nature] made higher than the heavens." Moreover, "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death: for it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Now, my brother, mark the blessedness of these things, and trace, as the Lord helps thee, thy fellowship with "the Man of sorrows." It is in thine own very nature He comes forth, sent of the Father in that nature, that He might perfectly know, not only as God, but also as "holy, harmless, undefiled" man, what a bitter, abhorrent, and detestable thing sin is. Yet He sinned not! As He himself testifies, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." There was no corruption-no law of sin in his holy members, or in his sacred spotless heart, for Satan to work upon. He might cast in ten thousand sparks of fiery temptation, but there was none of the tinder of corrupt fallen nature to catch fire on contact with his hellish darts. How then, you will say, did Christ suffer, so that his children may and do have fellowship with him?

He suffered, and was a Man of sorrows, not as a sinner, but be-

cause his nature was holy and separate from sinners. And this is the reason every child of God goes mourning in distress and sorrow of heart still. Not because the new man sins! No. The new man is born of God! and John says, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not;" but because he is living in daily contact with sin; because from daily and hourly bitter experience, he is constrained to say with Paul, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will—which is the acting of the new creature—is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not I find then a law—like the law of gravitation in a falling body—that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. FOR I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD AFTER THE INWARD MAN; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin in my members. O wretched man-or, O man of sorrows—that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Now, from all this it is clear that the new creature, which Paul here calls the inward man, sinneth not; and yet it is the inward man in the child of God who is the man of sorrows, who weeps for deliverance, and groans being burdened. But what is the cause of this? It is the holiness of the new nature, which is the life, spiritual, of the new man, that causes him to suffer; and thus—in this sense, but this is not the only one—we have fellowship with Christ as the Man of sorrows. This can only be understood by a new creature in Christ.

Who shall in any degree comprehend the depth of those sorrows which from the same cause filled the holy soul of our adorable Redeemer! as on every hand He beheld the detestable image of Satan in all his numberless progeny of multiplied sins, brought forth incessantly in and by those who nevertheless were dearer to the heart of Jesus than his own life? In this view of the wonderful subject how full of astonishing depths of sorrow, do those words appear—presuming we may so apply them—as spoken by the Man of sorrows on beholding, led captive thus,

"The darling of his loving heart, The apple of his eye."

"Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." Nevertheless, "many waters cannot quench love, neither [eternal praises to our covenant Jehovah] can the floods drown it." (Song

viii. 6). For the spotless Lamb of God thus to behold his own chosen bride full of all abominations was in itself sufficient so to overpower his sacred heart with bitterness, as to make Him preeminently "the Man of sorrows." If "just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," how much more the spotless Jesus, by that ever-flowing fountain of evil which presented itself to Him wherever He turned his pure eye. We contemplate the Man of sorrow thus, not as God alone, but as the Man our own Brother, full of pure sympathy and sorrow, weeping over many a beloved but then unsubdued one in Jerusalem. And we must not stop here. but we must also contemplate the same tender heart riven with sorrow, as He is compelled to say to his beloved Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men!" (Matt. xvi. 23). And again, after Peter's abominable cursings and denials, who shall measure the conflict between sorrow and love, when He turned and looked upon Peter! This was the Man of sorrows suffering, not for but from sin; and in this sorrow all his living members have daily and hourly communion and fellowship with Him now.

But, my brother, before we turn from this point, come with me a moment and draw a precious honey-drop from the breasts of Zion's consolations, in the midst of thy sorrowful communings with thy spotless Head. What is thy feeling towards thyself, upon every fresh discovery of the deep-rooted evils of thy corrupt nature? Canst thou pass it over as a light and trifling matter, and scoff at the bitter tear of true penitence which fills the eye of a sin-sick prodigal? Does a shudder of true godly fear run over thy frame, lest at any time the knowledge of the freeness and the fulness of pardoning grace should tend to produce indifference of heart about sin? or in any degree issue, through the power of sin, in thy conscience becoming seared as with a hot iron? How blessed is this simple precious fear! It is the beginning of wisdom! and like a living bell in the skirt, the moment the viper begins to stir itself, its shrill notes of alarm wake up the spiritual guard who place the citidal in It is a fountain of life, or a living fountain! It is incorruptible! Why? It is the pure manifestation of the life of God in the new man, and stands in the eternal life union which makes us. if children, one with our most glorious Head. Because we are new creatures, we have this fear. Because we have this fear, we suffer. and are ever groaning being burdened. But now, my brother, the Lord open thy heart to receive the fulness of the mercy connected

herewith. Our glorious Christ suffered being tempted; as it is written. "Who in the days of his flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered: and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. v. 7). The "fountain of life," even godly fear, is the well-spring of this simple obedience. He was obedient in sufferings unto death, even the death of the cross. We in his life, as new creatures, learn our obedience by the things which we suffer, having this godly fear. Without this fear, sin would produce in us no such suffering. What then follows? As sure as we have this fear, we suffer WITH HIM being obedient children—like the needle is obedient to the pole which attracts it-made so by his own precious fear put into our hearts: therefore He is the Author of ETERNAL SALVATION to us! Hence follows the crowning blessedness, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit [inasmuch as we have this precious fear of the Lord that we are the children of God: and if children then heirs: heirs of God [my brother, prepare thy hallelujahs for a chorus of blessing and praise to-night] joint-heirs with Christ!" Do you ever think, beloved little faith, of the meaning of this word Joint-Heirs? It is fellow-heirs, raised up in Him to an equality of title to eternal full possession and enjoyment of the boundlessly rich and glorious inheritance, whatever it is in all its immortal grandeur! Yes, this little bell in the skirt, whispers to us in the midst of all our sorrow, these sweet and heavenly words, "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's!" Chime on then thou precious godly fear. We stop not here, however, but to confirm all, we must follow out the grand total in the Spirit's declaration, "IF so BE THAT WE SUFFER WITH HIM, THAT WE MAY BE ALSO GLORIFIED TOGETHER!" (Rom. viii. 17). The chief point ever to be borne in mind, that Satan may not dispute us out of our honey drop of consolation, which if sought for, is to be found in each daily cup of sorrow, is this, that in all these sorrows arising from the in-being of sin, we are truly suffering with our glorious "Man of sorrows." The Lord help thee, my brother, to seek after this sweet assurance in all thy sorrows, then thou wilt be taught to understand the apostle's meaning where he says, "As sorrowing, yet ALWAYS REJOIC-ING." It is suffering because we belong to Christ; and therefore, bitter as it may be in itself, we have cause for rejoicing that we are accounted worthy to suffer for his sake. "Such honour have all his saints!"

I must, however, add a word here in answer to the rising sigh of little faith; for this is a point on which in days that are past I have found extreme difficulty in my own experience. I know the question will spring up in thy mind, my feeble brother, But how can my daily affliction of soul be of this honourable nature, when I feel it all arises from my own corrupt, wicked, rebellious, ungrateful, vain and flinty heart?

I must again point you to that which suffers in you; and pray the Lord the Spirit to open your understanding to perceive, that in yourself there are two perfectly distinct and conflicting powers or properties always more or less vigorously operating. The one sins, rebels, is vain, without spiritual feeling; and instead of overflowing with gratitude for all aboundings of mercy, is sordid, world-seeking, carnal! sensual! devilish! while the other is ever up-going in aspiration and desire after freedom from this bondage of corruption, just like a pining captive taken from among the rose-plots of the lovely Sharon, and imprisoned in a dark, damp, and loathsome cell in the gloomy dungeons of Babylon, must have been ever panting for his native plains, and feeling, morning by morning, that nothing short of a return to their soft and balmy atmosphere could restore him to happiness and health. Every pang of thy desolate heart, my beloved brother, proves that thou hast that life within thee which is of heavenly origin-born from above! that can no more take pleasure in sin than the captive Israelite could take pleasure in his cell. Yea, more, and every groan which thy condition presses from thy contrite spirit, finds its true meaning in those sweetly characteristic words of the prophet, "The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit" (Isa. li. The Lord help thee to perceive that thy sorrows are godly sorrows! The sorrows of a new creature in Christ; and that it is because thou art "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," that thou art the daily prey to suffering from the very cause which was one of the many which made Him to be pre-eminently "a Man of sorrows" here. And therefore it is thy daily privilege to gather honey from the carcase of this slain lion—for the old man is crucified with Christ. Christ suffered because He saw the baneful effects of sin working in his mystical members. You suffer because you feel the working of the law of sin in your members. But the prize is thine, my brother; for if so be we suffer with Him, it is that we may be glorified together.

But Christ was, moreover, pre-eminently "the Man of sorrows,"

inasmuch as He could in anticipation realize the greatness and depth of those sufferings which as the Surety of his dearly-loved body, He had covenanted with Jehovah to undergo.

Here what unutterable cause have we to bless our covenant God, that in our fallen condition He has not suffered us to labour every day under this sorrow! How great is his kindness that He has shut up in his own mighty hand all our future! and has told us to take no thought for the morrow. And should we not therefore confidingly hang upon the present, rather than be ever travelling on in doleful suspense as to the future? especially when, up to this moment, I know all the Lord's living ones will join with me in saying, that "hitherto the Lord hath helped me." Is it not so, my brother? Yes, say you, it is true, so far as the past is concerned; but less than an hour ago, I saw such a heavy black cloud approaching, that I am persuaded the Lord is about to visit me with something very terrific! Ah poor little faith, thou art looking on the dark side of the cloud! thou hast seen many a one fringed with gold and glory in days which have passed, which have looked as black to thee at first sight as that which terrifies thee now. The eye of sense is taken up with the gloom its shadows cast upon thee. Yet it is most simple and precious when rightly understood. It is, moreover, most profitable that these clouds should come. There is blessed teaching in all these dark clouds. You never water flowers while the sun is shining upon them in all his glory; it is not natural. So the Lord gives us our choicest teachings under clouds, and at night time; as it is written, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew." It is upon the cloud, as upon a chariot. He comes to us, and faith can often catch a glimpse of the glorious golden trimming of his royal garment, as He drops it over the edge, to let us know that He is seated on the cloud, and shining in all his majesty on the upper side of the cloud.

But in all the sorrows which arise from our anticipated afflictions, HOPE attends us. Not so our glorious "Man of sorrows." He had no hope of escape. He knew the awful extent of the suffering He had to pass through. He knew that having taken our nature into union with his Divine Person, He had become bound thereby to put away that incalculable load of sin, which as a debt must have otherwise eternally held his wife beneath its guilt. He knew that, by becoming what He had become, under the covenant engagements which He had entered into as the Mediator of his body the Church, He had been "made sin" instead of his Church; and that as such, Justice had now to deal with Him alone. He knew, moreover, the

depth and heat of torment which composed that hell through which He had to bear his well-beloved Bride, "that He might present her. to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish." Therefore, He exclaims, "but I have a baptism to be baptized with -a baptism of fire indeed-and how am I straitened-or painedtill it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50). Who shall calculate the amount or the acuteness of those ever-present sorrows which arose to Him, and pressed down his sacred, sympathizing, broken heart, as by that divine knowledge which He possessed, He moment by moment travelled forward in terrific realization of that tremendous closing conflict! Need we marvel that "his visage was so MAR-RED MORE THAN ANY MAN!" We see Him overwhelmed once in the garden, but who shall tell, what in those long nights of solitude spent upon the mountains were the agonies of his afflicted soul? Such were his continual sorrows, that the Jews say to Him, judging by the worn aspect of his countenance, when He was but about

thirty years of age, "Thou art not yet fifty years old."

Yes, there are moments when the living child of God has communion, in his measure, with his suffering Lord. Nevertheless, the utmost he can bear amounts but to a drop compared to the mighty ocean in which our glorious Christ was plunged. The utmost we can know of the nature of this suffering to which Christ was a living martyr during all his days, is to be found in those moments of crushing terror and bitterness of anticipated torment which are realized when the Spirit convinces us of sin! The law, in all its condemning power is charged home upon the conscience, while the burning shafts from the quiver of God's justice, full of wrath, curse, and fury. enter into the soul! Hell is begun! Despair fills the mind, and nothing appears in store but "wrath to come!" Ah, my brother, if you have been here in any deep measure, the remembrance of the wormwood and the gall will humble your soul in astonishment and wonder at the greatness of that crushing burden, and the intensity of that soul horror through which "the Man of sorrows" passed in the realization by anticipation of his accumulated sufferings. If the little that you could perceive of the extent and fierceness of the wrath of God against one convicted sinner was the beginning of hell to you, how utterly overwhelming that concentration of sorrow which in its full measure lighted on the soul of Him who could realize in all its immensity the eternal sufferings of a number which no man can number, which He had to drink at one tremendous draught! But we must pause. Jehovah's peace rule in your hearts. Amen.

THE MAN OF SORROWS!

(No. 2.)

" A man of sorrows."—Isa. liii. 3.

THERE is but one ingredient that will really sweeten sorrow, and that is LOVE. But this is ALWAYS to be found in EVERY cup of sorrow that is put into the hand of a child of God. What then is thy privilege and thy first concern, my suffering brother? Is it not the moment you receive every fresh cup, to look for the jewel in it? It is as surely there, if thou art alive from the dead spiritually, as that God is faithful! God is love; and Christ is God; therefore Christ is love! and He has said, "Lo I am with you ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world." Christ is the Pearl of great price. which God the Father has cast into thy cup; but He lies hidden at the bottom. Dost thou desire to behold Him? Drink deep and cheerfully, my brother; nauseous as may be the draught, the Pearl is at the bottom, and the moment thine eye rests upon Him, thy sorrow shall be turned into joy. Nine-tenths of the bitterness we find in our daily cups of sorrow arises from our folly in sipping and tasting, turning away and delaying, instead of taking the cup for CHRIST'S SAKE by faith, knowing that Christ is there, and that as sure as we drink it, He will fulfil his promise, "I will see you again." It is thus we drink and forget our poverty, and remember our misery no more. It is thus we learn that EVERYTHING We suffer, we suffer FOR HIS SAKE, "because we belong to Christ." And as we gain experience in this way of daily seeking our precious Christ, sorrows become sacred! Yes, and sweet too; because we find always the issue to be that they make us suitable to Christ, and Christ blessedly suitable to us. For it is only as we are drinking of this cup, we find sweetly realized in our souls the precious fellowship of communion with Him in his sufferings.

My brother, the Lord help thee to seek for thy Jesus in thy sorrow cup! Thou shalt never be disappointed. But remember thou must drink the contents of the cup, in most cases, before He is found. Nevertheless, Faith often sees the hand of tender mercy drop the pearl into the cup, and knows it is there; then although it is out of sight, hope anchors in cheering expectation, while love willingly drinks the bitter draught. But we must know these things by practice. And many were the mind-distracting lessons Paul had to

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 36.

learn, before he could say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. iv. 11).

As love centres on the person of Christ, however, and as we grow a little in grace, and in a knowledge of Him, we begin to learn that all that happens to us, now that we are the Lord's by manifest union, producing sorrow of heart, is weighed out to us in daily portions, in order that we may know our fellowship with Christ in his sufferings.

Some may object here, and say, that we are not to take into the account all the common events of life which happen alike to all men. But this is a great mistake, and the prevalence of such an opinion robs the soul of much gospel sweetness in the experience of the Lord's watchfulness and care over his precious members during their pilgrim journey. Mark what Paul testifies upon this point, and the Lord the Spirit lead you, my brother, to seek to live accordingly in every LITTLE circumstance connected with time, as well as with regard to the mighty affairs which belong to eternity; for you will never live happily until you can find Christ, not only ALL, but IN ALL! Paul says, "the life that I now live IN THE FLESH—this includes every temporal circumstance—I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. iii. 20).

But we shall see this more sweetly developed by following again in fellowship our glorious "Man of sorrows," as He, the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through suffering, so that as a great High Priest, who from his own personal knowledge of such things, as his beloved ones have to pass through daily, He can perfectly understand, and can now be touched afresh, by a feeling of our infirmities.

The NATURE of his sorrows was threefold. His were BODILY. MENTAL, and soul sorrows. In each of which He was pre-eminently "the Man of sorrows;" but in each of which his Church will have everlasting cause to glory, because she will be ever discovering the blessedness of that double fellowship, namely, partner-

ship and communion, she has with Him in ALL.

We begin with the bodily sufferings of Christ. And we begin where He began. It was in a manger where we see the first dawn of that immeasurable love which caused the Almighty Builder of the universe, not only to pass by the nature of angels, but to come down into the very lowest state of abject want and poverty in this little speck of a world; that He might place himself in a position so humble, that his beloved Bride, though a beggar on a dunghill. may find a companion on a level in earthly circumstances, in Jesus the Bridegroom of his beloved body the Church! It was not from among the then princes and the nobles of the earth He came! No. It was not from imperial Rome He chose to come forth! No. But although his pedigree "after the flesh" ran through the royal and noble line of the wise and gorgeous Solomon, the valiant and poetic David, the ancient and faithful Abraham; yet He suffered his house to fall so far into dilapidation, that its ruins could only be found in the despised and obscure village of Nazareth. It was according to his own infinite condescension, that although unsearchably rich, yet for our sakes He became poor; so poor, that He declares "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." So poor, that He had not wherewith to pay his tribute. So poor, that the only provision He made for his widowed mother, was to consign her to the care of his beloved disciple. This poverty entailed upon Him much of sorrow. He often hungered. But why was all this? Was it not because enrolled in that long catalogue of favoured names, at the head of which He delighted to stand in the Lamb's book of life -were multitudes who in this world should be poor and needy? daily subject, if not to the actual privations from want, yet kept so dependent on the Lord's bounty, that they need really such a friend who by his own experience is able to sympathize with them. blessed is it to go thus to a precious Christ, when pressed down in spirit by adversity, and to talk freely to Him about our present or coming needs, knowing that He perfectly understands what want means in its fullest sense. How sweetly does the Holy Ghost record numberless instances of his compassion and tenderness manifested towards his needy followers, to encourage us to go and cast ALL our care upon Him, knowing He is Jesus Christ THE SAME; and that He careth for us. The Lord help thee, my poor exercised brother, in all thy pinching temporal necessities, to go with simple freedom to thine Elder Brother, and tell Him thou hast a heavy need which is crushing thee! Tell Him thou art suffering in fellowship with Him. Our precious "Man of sorrows" has a tender and a liberal heart! and more, our beloved Joseph is Lord of all Egypt! The gold and the silver, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, are his! I tell you, my dear tried brother, could many a rich child of God taste the sweetness that arises out of being compelled to live daily in simple dependence upon the Lord for temporal provision, and thus to be watching the marvellous precision with which our dear exalted Christ times the bestowal of his providential mercies; they would be almost ready to cast away their yellow bage. that they may have daily cause to transact even temporal business with a precious Christ. It is true, my poor penniless brother, that thou hast no cause to envy the rich man his stores! How much more blessed to be daily the companion of the Man of sorrows, and to dip in his dish; than to be compelled to spend, as the rich man does, two-thirds of his life in watching against the artifices of the wise children of this world, lest they should rob him of his purse.

But we must pass on and pass by many other bodily sufferings which arose to our blessed "Man of sorrows," from the multitude of outward and inward circumstances which made Him wearv and worn down by affliction, and come to those most terrible bodily sufferings to which He was exposed on our behalf. And here we must ever bear in mind the weakness of his sacred frame. How sweet is it in affliction and in pain, to go over all that our precious Christ was subjected to! How precious in the night watches, when the Spirit the Comforter leads us away from self, to contemplate his agony! It is here, in acute pain, the dear child of God has such incalculable advantage over the man of the world. And it is here we trace the blessedness of that living union by which all things to us are changed into things which belong to Him. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." It is thus, as the spiritual mind is led out in contemplations upon Him, that our bodily pains become sanctified, and in them we have "fellowship with Him in his sufferings."

I cannot forbear here speaking freely of myself. I have nothing to do with the rules of critics; my place is by the couch of a suffering member of the body of my most glorious Christ. And I say to you, beloved one, Jesus Christ is the best chloroform!

I have proved Him such.

Three years ago I was under the surgeon's operating knife for a few minutes. Not that the sufferings in such a case are more severe than the pain arising from many diseases, do I mention this; but because there is something more peculiarly terrible to our nature in the cutting of flesh and in the flowing of blood, than in simple pain. The anticipatory actings of a perhaps too lively imagination had left but little courage for the trial. However, the moment the first gash made by the sharp knife was felt, I found I had a Friend! The Pearl was found in the cup! My heart had been going out in earnest pleadings for the presence and help of my precious Christ for hours, yea days; but He had sent me no message. He had not spoken a "fear not," so as to enable me to know that He would meet me in the fire. And I have thought, from the lan-

guage of the three children, Daniel's companions, that they were by no means sure the Lord would so signally appear as to prevent the fire taking effect upon them, for they say, "If it be so, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if Not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods" (Dan. iii. 17). They knew the Lord would deliver them, but how they do not seem to be at a point about.

"Dream not of faith so strong, That shuts all doubting out."

But true to his promise, even to the letter, the moment they fell down into the fire, He met them. He was there ready to receive Yes, He is in the cup! Fear not, my trembling brother, it matters not what the fuel may be that feeds thy furnace; when thou art fairly brought into it, thou shalt find his precious arm encircling thee, and although thy heart and flesh may fail, He will be the very strength of thy heart; so that when thou comest forth from the fire, it shall be thy delight to say, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!" But now mark, it is the province of faith, as we are approaching the fire, not so much to look after a feeling of strength already given, as a preparation for the conflict—although this, though unseen, is not withheld—but to depend upon his faithfulness to his promise, "I WILL BE WITH YOU." Such simple confidence stands proof against Satan's malice; he thrusts sorely at poor little faith, and points to his total weakness, yea, nothingness! But faith glories in this condition, and replies. True I am less than nothing and vanity; but what of that? I am going into the furnace to MEET MY ALMIGHTY FRIEND! I cannot fight; I cannot stand a moment! but what of that-

"The battle is not yours, But Israel's faithful God."

I tell you, my dear brother, this simple way of living is only to be learned by personal experience. But it is most blessed to prove that in every kind of sorrow, now that we are new creatures in Him, there is not an afflictive circumstance into which He brings us, or causes us to be brought, but it is that we may grow thereby in our knowledge of Him as "the Man of sorrows;" and that we may have fellowship with Him in his suffering. How does the Pearl sweeten the cup of bitters, even though it be bodily pain! Christ is the sum of all true godliness; and "godliness is profitable for ALL things." But to return to my own personal experience of the preciousness of Christ in my hour of need.

Until He began to shine, all I could do in feeling was to hang passively upon Him, as an empty cup hangs upon a nail. moment my real need of his help and strength began, that moment He opened blessed communion with my soul. Yes, He manifested Himself to me, otherwise than He does to the world. lowed up all the thoughts and affections of my heart in divine contemplations of his own suffering person, and enabled me to read in every wound, and every precious drop of sacred blood, his love and pity, his compassion and delight towards me! He took me with Him into Pilate's hall; I saw Him there, "oppressed and afflicted, led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not his mouth!" I knew Him to be-while thus "the Man of sorrows" indeed !-- "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." And I worshipped Him there! I saw Him, scorned by Pilate; roughly flung about by the insolent soldiers! cruelly scourged by a boisterous band of unfeeling brutelike men! The crown of thorns thrust rudely down upon his sacred temples, amidst a vell of discordant and ribald mirth! I saw Him torn and bleeding! I saw the cruel mockers, full of hellish fury set upon Him, crushed and helpless as He was, and beat Him with their fists in ruthless, unpitying rage! Bruised, bleeding, disfigured, with visage marred indeed! I saw Him dragged into the presence of the reviling Jews, a fierce and frantic rabble, who the moment they beheld that spectacle of helpless innocence and bleeding love, scorned and derided Him! cursed Him! plucked off his hair, and spit upon Him! rending the air with eager shouts of CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM! I saw Him thus, and all my little pains dimmed into nothing, like a taper burning in the sun.

Numberless times had I read and thought over the same wonderful scene; but all had been but as the hearing of the ear until now. But now mine eyes saw the very scene itself! and at every fresh opening circumstance my soul was swallowed up in sweet dissolving sympathy and fellowship with the holy sufferer. Nor did the scene stop here. But following on, He led me as an interested spectator still onward, seeming as though He turned at every step, and with a smile of tender love and contented submission, whisper in my heart, "I suffer all this for you!"

I saw his rugged ponderous cross laid roughly upon his bleeding shoulders. I saw Him stagger beneath its weight, and goaded onward, attempt to drag his faltering footsteps up the dolorous way towards the solemn mount of Calvary. I saw Him sink beneath the weight of his burden, and amidst the cruel kicks and jeers of

his hell-inflated persecutors, fall prostrate fainting on the ground—no eye to pity—no hand to help—by heaven and earth deserted,

left a prey to hell!

Still onward! As my little need increased, so did the sufferings of my most glorious Christ keep more than pace therewith; and. swallow up in deep and loving adoration and amazement all thought or care about myself. The suffering of his sacred body, as I saw Him now, shut out self-sympathy, and opened every gushing emotion of the heart in sweet condolence with my Lord. I saw Him, naked as He was! Oh dreadful spectacle! His quivering limbs strained and distorted: lacerated, bruised, and bleeding still, nailed to the cross! yet now He continued to look lovingly on me! Then I could read, in that doleful countenance, a little of the nature, horrid blackness, and penalty of sin! Oh fearful thing! What words can paint the hideous ugliness, the tremendous guilt, the exceeding sinfulness of sin? And yet—oh fearful truth!—after all this I feel that in myself I am a living, moving mass of sin! every moment like a boiling caldron, ever sending to the surface the polluted scum of the hidden iniquity within. It is while gazing on that scene of dying love displayed to faith on Calvary, the sinner bought by blood begins to calculate in some degree the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of that rich love divine, which was content to pay so large a sum that sinners black as hell might find a ransom and a robe. But what a Ransom! Who shall count its price? The priceless blood of God! (Acts xx. 28). But what a Robe! What pencil paint its glory? The righteousness of God! (2 Cor. v. 21).

My brother, do you know what acute bodily pain is? Henceforth the Lord help thee to live in the precious apprehension of this truth, that as a new creature in Christ, thou art a living member of his sacred body. Whatever thou sufferest even physically, every member is called upon to suffer with thee; as it is written, "There should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. xii. 25-27). But now observe; if every member is thus bound to suffer with thee, in sympathy, in helping thy needs, in praying for thy deliverance, in bringing before thy observation every thought and circumstance which can in any way tend to alleviate thy pains, how much more is thy glorious "Man of sorrows" bound by every tie of love, and pity, and compassion; by his sacred promise—by his blessed offices and relations, especi-

ally as thy living Head, to come to thy help, to make thy bed. Yes. He has said it, "Jehovah will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness" (Ps. xli. 3). Bless his precious name, He does it! He delights in it! How tenderly too! He takes the weary sufferer in his arms, pillows his aching head upon the bosom of his love, and causes him almost to forget his own sufferings and pains in holding dear communion and precious fellowship with Himself in his deep sorrow. My brother. be not content with a Christ for thy soul alone. Religious systems lead the mind astray in these things. The grand centre of all true life and living is UNION TO CHRIST! and what says our blessed apostle Paul, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved BLAMELESS unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23). And what so great a folly, and therefore so worthy of blame, as to be sending to all earthly physicians, and forgetting our only true Friend in the largest sense of friendship; who in our own nature is living in eternal union with us, and who-little as we realize it—manages our minutest affairs for us: and even in the case of bodily pain, measures out to us ALL we suffer, according to covenant orderings, that we may suffer with Him.

How different would be our estimate of things, could we always thus realize our own dear Saviour, "the Man of sorrows," in all bodily affliction! We should then look upon every scar as an honourable badge; and in the midst of our groanings often be constrained to burst forth into a song, thus—

"How bitter that cup, no heart can conceive, Which He drank quite up that sinners might live; His way was much rougher and darker than mine, Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?"

Nay, my brother! but the Lord help you to remember your King in every conflict, and to imitate a poor sailor in one of Nelson's battles. An officer going below to see after the wounded, heard, as he approached the surgeon's department, one voice rising high above all the cries and groans of that fearful place, singing "God save the king!" and to his astonishment found it proceeded from a poor fellow who was at that moment having his leg cut off! This was true valour. Oh could we but imitate him, we should often find a shout of praise far sweeter relief under suffering than our bitter repining groans.

The dear Comforter stir up our pure minds daily by way of remembrance in these things; then shall we know "Christ is all and IN ALL!"

His peace be with you all. Amen.

THE MAN OF SORROWS!

(No. 3.)

" A man of sorrows."-Isaiah liii. 3.

Ir is not without the most seasonable and gracious teaching that we find recorded in the Gospels the numberless instances of slowness in learning and weakness of faith manifested by the Lord's disciples under his own immediate instruction. How plainly does he in many places tell them what was about to happen to him, and what should follow, as it is written, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day," (Matt. xvi. 21.) What could be plainer than these statements? And yet we find, no sooner do these things really take place, than all fall to doubting and mourning, as though all their hopes had perished, and their expectations had been cut off by the craft and malice of their enemies. Peter says, "I go a fishing." Thomas declares, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side I will not believe!" The two who journeyed together to Emmaus, after all they had been told, could get no higher in their communings than to REASON together, which made them sad! How gracious of our dear Comforter, that all these, and so many other similar instances are preserved for our comfort and instruction! For, we find daily in our own experience a ruling disposition to judge by the sight of our eyes and not by the hearing of faith. We see in ourselves still the same proneness to REASON, to DOUBT, to GIVE UP! And yet there is not a single circumstance outwardly or state of experience inwardly, into which God's own living children come daily-whether it arise from tribulation in body or mind. Temptation, however hot and bitter. Darkness of soul, however deep and horrible. bellion of heart, however raging and unreasonable. Stiff-neckedness, however haughty and grievous. Corruption of nature, however disgusting and soul-humbling; but the whole of it is as clearly pointed out to us as the certain accompaniment of true spiritual life, by the light of which these opposing things are discovered, and by the power of which they are keenly felt, as were all the circumstances connected with Christ's sufferings, death, and resurrection clearly pointed out to his disciples. Whence then our comfort in these things? The soul-sustaining knowledge of the unvarying kindness of our dear "man of sorrows" towards us in all. For while we find our exact resemblance to the disciples in our slowness of heart. THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 37.

to believe, we also on the other hand prove Him to be Jesus Christ the same in his tenderness, as he draws near to us by the Spirit. and opens to us the scriptures, and shows us that after all our doubts and fears the good work of the Spirit is going on rightly in our souls. And that the same precious words apply to us, his members, as they did to Himself the glorious Head. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (John xxiv. 26.) Ought not we to suffer thus with him, as his members. that we may be glorified together? (Rom. viii. 17.) My suffering brother! How often have you said, "no cross! no crown!" and yet because the cross is not of your own choosing, but something which lays you very low in the dust, like Paul's thorn, you are writing bitter things against yourself and muttering inwardly, "It's all wrong! all these things are against me." Come with us again to-day! It may be, while we are talking together "The man of sorrows" will draw nigh and do by thee, as he did by Thomas! Then the same precious response shall flow out " my Lord and my God !"

The only blessed way of living in this world is to be every day, yea, every hour, looking out for fellowship with our most glorious. Christ as "The man of sorrows!" This is clearly pointed out to us by a blessed "companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Paul writes, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in ALL our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in ANY trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (2 Cor. i. 3—5).

Mark the two little words all and any, and the Lord help his dear children to live accordingly. And if Satan comes in and tells thee my brother, that such and such tribulations are not to be looked upon as forming part of the aboundings of the sufferings of Christ in us, point thine adversary to a testimony by the Spirit recorded in the same Epistle, (2 Cor. v. 17.) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; BEHOLD! ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW." It is impossible that anything can affect "a man in Christ," who is "born again," living in a new life, in the same way as it affected him when "dead in trespasses and sins." We are now living members of his body, and ALL THINGS happen to us as such. There is infinitely more importance connected with this truth than may at first sight strike even the

Lord's own children. But the more they look into this subject the clearer will they see-The Holy Comforter being their teacherhow far below their real point of honour and privilege they are living, while they are leaving out of their spiritual reckoning a single circumstance which befals them. God's Israel of old were led about and instructed in the wilderness. It will be readily granted that every step of that peculiar people was ordered for a special end and purpose by Jehovah himself: as it is written, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger. and fed thee with manna, (which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know.) that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. viii. 2). Now, upon what ground are we to account for all this teaching? Is it not upon this alone? Because this people was God's own peculiar people? Other nations and people had their trials, their famines, their wars, their plagues. But in the case of Israel alone all these things were overruled for this special end, that they might grow in spiritual knowledge thereby. So will it be found with ALL the tribulations of God's people still, all comes now, because we belong to Christ. That we may grow in a knowledge of Him, and have fellowship with him in his sufferings.

In last lecture we went over a few features of the sufferings of "The man of sorrows," which were immediately borne in his body. To day we must add to that pre-eminence in suffering those bitter sorrows which come more immediately under the characters of the

sufferings of his heart, or mental sorrows.

We have already seen a little of that suffering which might be brought under this head, while looking at the cause of his sorrows arising from the holiness of his nature; but much remains in which He was made a reproach, while in all he did there was the perfection of purity of purpose. Indeed of him, and of him alone, in all things, could it be said, he went about doing good, yet "he was despised and rejected of men," every motive was called in question. Yea more, the more he did, in displaying his great kindness towards the poor suffering objects of his compassion, the more bitterly did his countrymen hate and oppose him, declaring that he had a Devil and was mad! "He came to his own, and his own received him not."

But it is quite impossible for us, fallen as we are into a state of sinful selfishness, to form a due estimate of the bitter sufferings of our adorable "Man of sorrows," which were of this nature, the sufferings of his tender, loving heart. He knew not a sinfully selfish feeling or a selfish thought. His was pure, unmixed benevo-How deep must have been his sorrows as he moved about among his kindred and his countrymen, to trace suspicion here, indifference there, the curled lip of contemptuous scorn on one hand, and the flashing of the eye of furious hatred on the other. healed the sick! gave sight to the blind! He made the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing! He unstopped the deaf ears, raised the dead, cleansed the leper, restored reason to the maniac! He fed the hungry multitude! He stilled the raging storm! He even provided wine for the feast! He comforted the mourners, wept at beholding the sorrows of his friends, and was ever sweetly discoursing so as to call forth the testimony of those who listened to Him that he spake as never man spake! Yet, in the midst of all this, "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows!"

Something of the nature of this suffering may be traced sometimes among ourselves; although but in a slight degree, because it is impossible for a sinful, selfish heart to enter fully into the intensity of his sorrows of this nature, who was all love.

An affectionate, devoted mother spends her entire strength of body and of mind in caring for her children. She watches over them, toils for them, gives up her life a sacrifice on the altar of her affection to her family. What does she obtain in return, they are disobedient, unruly, and vicious in their childhood, her council and her kindness are alike received with indifference, and in a moment forgotten, self-will and present gratification, it matters not at what cost are the ruling passions of these growingly ungovernable They grow in years, their hearts become callous, and their consciences by repeated remorseless indulgence become seared, although there may seem to be the remains of humanity towards the throng without, towards this one alone, who has been their loving, willing slave, they have no pity! The more she weeps in bitterness, and implores in brokenness of heart, the rougher and more implacable they grow! at last they see her sink, beneath her sorrows, and they pass over her grave jesting and boisterous as though such a being had never lived! her meek image is torn from the memory and trampled in the dust! We have seen and abhorred such monsters. This, however, exhibits but a drop of that bitterness which overflowed the mental cup of the "The man of sorrows." He was the friend of sinners! Yet himself heard one of his dearest friends, when he was in his last extremity of friend-lessness, with awful imprecations declare, that he knew not the man! Thus despised was he and rejected of men.

And think you, dear little-faith, that you can follow your Brother born for adversity in the regeneration, and escape sorrows of a like kind? No. Thou shalt have daily fellowship with him in these sufferings also. But the Lord help thee to remember as they spring up in thy path, that it is WITH HIM thou art suffering.

The pure life of God in the soul will make a man honest and The more he knows of himself after the flesh, the more he discovers of the absolute freeness and sovereignty of divine grace. The fuller the openings, by the Spirit to his understanding, of the glory of the person of Christ, and his relation to the church, the more will he discover the clearness of that eternal line of distinction which Jehovah himself has drawn between the world and the church: between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent: between the children of the wicked and the children of God. His honesty will compel him often to speak out among religious friends, who will instantly rise against him, if they are not born of God, but merely trained up in some one of man's systems, and fed upon man's sweet and glowing preparations of RELIGIOUS SENTI-MENTALISMS. In our day these pious condiments are so skilfully chosen, proportioned, and blended, that whatever may be the particular name by which the religious dish is called, it is relished, and can be digested by any member of the "RELIGIOUS WORLD!" -How suggestive is this title! The WORLD BECOME RELIGIOUS! But let Christ as HE is. Christ the Head of his body the church. Christ the Life of his body, in whom every member was chosen and blessed with ALL spiritual blessings—faith and repentance included -before the foundation of the world! (Eph. i. 3,) be not merely mentioned, but EXALTED, set up on high! far above all opposing opinions and that which pleases the natural mind; let the child of God, who has received the whole truth, not into his head merely, but into his heart, in the love of it, plainly declare what in his conscience he honestly, in the sight of God, believes to be true, as to the eternal choice of the church in Christ, the certainty of its salvation, and the exclusive nature of that purchase which was made by the precious blood of Christ; and he will find many a hidden fire of persecution lighted up for him, and through which he must pass. We do not have fires in Smithfield now it is true. We live in a

day of boundless liberality. But while we bless God for the outward liberty we enjoy, we are compelled to feel, turn where we may in the "Religious world," the fine gold has become dim; anything almost meets with cheerful toleration but the sovereign grace of our covenant Jehovah in Christ Jesus! It is, however worthy of particular observation, that while all the various other ingredients which form the many systems which prevail among men will combine and commingle together, this one doctrine of the sovereign and exclusive nature of the purchase made by the precious blood of Christ, has a something in it which is as oil to water, it will not combine with anything that pleases man's natural mind, it is antagonistic to all that tends to Phariseeism, and self-complacency; therefore, the carnal mind of man must be full of enmity towards it. Besides, it is of that nature, again, as oil is to water, wherever it is found, it rises into prominence, it will be seen and float above all that opposes it. It follows therefore, since it cannot be in a system and be smothered up, but claims as its place, to be the chief corner stone, it is just that stone which every builder of a system, which seeks to please man, must reject. But mark, my brother, the true state of the case: thousands who reject this truth are convicted in their consciences, that it is to be seen as the golden thread running through the entire texture of God's Revelation in his word: therefore, like a very ugly person who has a vain mind, if you wish to make such an one your implacable enemy for life, you will plainly tell them of that one fact, which they already know as well as you do, but which it has been the whole business of their lives to endeavour to conceal from themselves. No, there can be no fellowship spiritually, where there is no agreement in this fundamental truth. But just the reverse. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12.) What so ungodly as to tell or conceal a lie? especially if that lie has reference to God's truth. An honest child of God cannot do it. If he mixes with the "Religious world," he is constantly exposed to trials arising from the bitter enmity which everywhere exists in the minds of those, who have a name that they live while they are dead, against the truth, God the Father gave a people to his Son to redeem, "Thine they were and thou gavest them me." That this people are the Church of Christ; his mystical body. That these are his sheep. That they are in the hand of Jehovah in eternal security. That they are complete in Christ. That they are the personal property of Christ, not only by the Father's gift, but by ACTUAL PUR-CHASE: the price, his own precious blood! (Acts xx, 28: 1 Peter ii. 9, marginal reading.) That the justice of God held them in pawn, but Christ came forth and paid ALL their debt! and

"Payment he cannot twice demand; First at my bleeding Surety's hand, And then again at mine.

That the justice of God is now on the side of the church. the Father delights to behold the church as she stands "Perfect in · Christ Jesus." That there is therefore no condemnation to the Church, and that there can be no separation from Christ's love. That by virtue of the eternal purpose and good pleasure of Jehovah. the Church is "In Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption," and that Christ the Head of the body must fail before one of his members can perish! He that will live godly in Christ Jesus, maintaining these glorious truths—and he cannot live godly without doing so— SHALL suffer persecution. All the zeal in the world, however admirable it may be in its way: all the morality that can adorn a man and make him the greatest moral blessing to his generation, is not godliness; if existing apart from a spiritual knowledge of, and divine union to Christ. But he that can boast of most zeal and most moral excellence, but who feels that his religion does not consist in that secret, inward, Christ-endearing, because broken-hearted fellowship and communion with the broken-hearted, compassionate "Man of sorrows:" and who is moreover a stranger to that hidden and peculiar holy life within, which by its light discovers foulness. black as hell in the purest heart, and by its power is ever burning upwards in a sacred and pure flame of intense and heavenly desire after eternal emancipation from the contamination of inward sin, and the galling bondage of corruption, which causes a spiritually living child of God in the midst of his greatest zeal and brightest morality to smite upon his breast, groan being burdened, and cry out hour by hour, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." I say, he who is a stranger to these things, but full of what is called religious zeal, and bright in his morality, will be the fiercest persecutor of one who honestly upholds the truth as it is in Jesus. Therefore, let not my brother be discouraged, although he may be called to suffer much bitter sorrow from such a source. It may proceed from those who are very dear to us by ties of kindred or friendship, and is thereby rendered doubly painful. The Lord help thee, my brother, to rejoice in thy portion. Thou art suffering WITH HIM, and thou shall gather many a sweet honey-drop out of these, in themselves, hitter teachings.

But I must add one word of caution here. Has the Lord made his precious truths very dear to thee? Dost thou feel that thou art called upon to be very valiant in defence of them? Beware, my brother, of the flesh! Thy proud heart will lead thee to deal with thine antagonist as though he, poor deceived one, could open his own blind eyes, No, deal tenderly with him. "Be pitiful, be courteous! not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing," (1 Peter iii. 9.) The Lord help you ever to bear in mind, however bitterly you may be persecuted, that it is by the grace of God you are what you are. You would not rave in return at a raving mad man, but if you loved him, you would go away in secret and pray for the poor creature, and weep to the praise of that goodness which had given you your reason.

But besides all this. The children of God are peculiarly exposed to mental sorrows which make the companionship of the dear "Man of sorrows," in fellowship very precious, from the effects of the power of Satan who is permitted to stir up strife between brethern, to sow discord among friends, by infusing into their minds or into our misconceptions as to the motives which influence in certain actions or words; and so a root of bitterness springs up. How severe are some of the sorrows which fill up the "much tribulation" of God's children arising from the fruitful cause! and how blighting is the effect of such rankling bitterness on the soul! In waiting upon the Lord, what enmity sometimes will infuse itself into the mind, and spread its deadly poison over the spiritual frame! until the soul is barren as the mountains of Gilboa.

Although the glorious "Man of sorrows" knew nothing of the rankling of this poison in his sacred mind, yet well did he know the desolate condition of heart arising out of the misconstructions put upon all he did and said. He had even to send a message to one of his dearest friends, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me!" The Lord help thee my troubled brother, if thou art suffering from this sorrow, to look for thy precious pearl in the cup. He is with thee still, and all creature comforts are permitted to fail thee, that thou mayest hang more simply on Him, who is thine unchanging Friend, "A Friend who loveth at all times and sticketh closer than a brother." Thou art suffering because thou belongest to Christ; and for this simple reason, that He may become hour by hour more precious to thee. "The chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely." He loves thee so tenderly, my brother, that He wants all thy heart in return.

His precious love abound in thy spirit. Amen.

THE MAN OF SORROWS!

(No. 4.)

"A man of sorrows."—Isaiah liii. 3.

THERE is much both in temper and in constitution, that must be taken into the account, with regard to those constant and various sufferings, which fill up the wilderness history of every member of

the family of God.

Indeed, I know not of a more afflictive lot, than to be of a weakly constitution, a nervous temperament, and an irritable disposition. Such a combination tends to produce in a spiritually living child of God, "A sorrowful spirit." Satan, who adds the most detestable cowardice to the malignity of his malice, takes advantage of such a state of things to produce the most lamentable depression of mind. Now, I do feel, although generally speaking, this is much neglected, that the Lord's people, who are not thus afflicted, are called upon to behave with the greatest tenderness and forbearance towards those of their weaker, and thus afflicted brethren, and that in nothing is there a wider scope for fulfilling the precept of the everloving apostle, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," than in soothing the sorrowing minds, and leading up the fearful hearts of such, by constantly bringing before them the true state of the case; namely, their completeness in Christ.

These feeble and often uncomely parts of the body mystical, uncomely in their tempers, their prevish complaints, and their dissatisfied behaviour, are still necessary. They are set in the body, according to the covenant design of our God, "ordered in all things, and sure,' for the express purpose of suffering the exact amount of mental pain, which they find falls to their lot daily. There is no accident in the matter. The very cross which they find, rebel as they may against it, is exactly that which they were appointed, in the great plan of eternity, to carry. Yes, they were as much appointed for the cross, as the cross for them. This is one way in which, as good soldiers, they fight under their great Captain. It may be very humiliating, but it is the way in which they have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. It is, moreover, the appointed way in which they are to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of thrist in their flesh," (Col. i. 24). Their sorrows produce THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTUREE, No. 38.

in them a peculiar kind of "NMEDS," all to magnify the riches of that fulness of all grace which is treasured up in "The man of Sorrows."

Christ contains in Himself a supply of abounding grace, just suitable, and only suitable, for exactly that kind of NEED into which thy condition brings thee daily, my feeble, nervous, irritable brother. Now observe the sweet way in which this all operates. Thou hast the life of God in thy soul. This pure and holy life is ever-striving against this evil temper, and peevishness of disposition. wouldst give the world to be always cheerfully singing, instead of complaining. I am not afraid of nursing thy evil tempers, by telling thee, the plain truth, no; it is all wretched sin, from beginning to end, but there is only one remedy. Not penance! That would only put the WILD BULL into a net! The remedy is precious blood! coupled with a simple, child-like acquaintance with Jesus, "The Man of Sorrows," as our exalted High-priest, our Prince, and our Saviour, who ever-liveth at the right hand of our covenant God and Father, to make prevailing intercession for us! and who has been exalted to His high, and glorious position for this one blessed object, that He may give to his weak, helpless, poor and needyyes sinful-members, that most precious grace, true godly sorrow in repentance, sweetly accompanied by a faith's realization of the remission of all our sins.

You may labour and strive, my exercised brother, to subdue, by your own efforts, these contrary workings which arise from the power of the law of sin, acting upon our frail, excitable, and nervous system; but with all your efforts, failure shall be the issue. The petulance, restless determination to cavil at every dispensation, and wilful discontent, will still prevail against all your own remedies. Fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, will alone dissipate your gloom and bring peace and contentment over your frame.

"Tis a sense of BLOOD-BOUGHT PARDON,
That dissolves a heart of stone."

Some, however, will turn upon me here, and say, "Is it not right that we should be always striving against these, and all other sinful propensities and feelings to which we are ever prone?" Strive! You might as well ask a shipwrecked sailor, whose bark has sunk from under him into the depths of the occean, if it is right for him to strive to keep himself afloat, so that he may reach the longed-for shore. I am talking about God's living children, who are partakers of a holy divine life, which is of a holy sin-abhorring nature, and can

no more cease to fight against, watch against, and mourn on account of the ever-active law of sin, than a living man can cease to breathe, or a famishing man can cease to crave a draught of water from the Show me a professor who does not daily grieve over the effects of the law of sin in his members and who is not as constantly striving to "put off the old man with his deeds," and I will show you in that person a man that is spiritually dead. Either he is a dead self-worshipping pharisee, or a disgusting sin-loving talker about the glorious doctrines of covenant grace, which he has received merely into his head, but which have never been feelingly experienced and laid nold upon, by that living faith which worketh by love, and which purifies the heart. Yes, my dear tempest-tossed, not comforted brother; strive! but the Lord help you to STRIVE LAWFULLY. The Lord himself has provided your remedy, it is not in yourself, that is in your flesh, but it is in Jesus only. It is only as you are led up by faith out of self, into communion and fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, that you can so forget your own misery as to obtain your longed-for triumph. I know this to be the case. But I must repeat to those of my brethren, who are not exercised with these distressing nervous afflictions, what I before hinted at, while you have good reason to bless the Lord for his mercy, morning by morning, that He has cast your frame in a different mould, it behaves you to show all tenderness and compassion in dealing with the more feeble members, not scolding them, and treating their foibles with contempt; but patiently, and continually holding up to them the Person of Christ, "The Man of Sorrows," in His fulness and precious suitability, as the only object that can bring peace and consolation into their troubled hearts.

"It hath pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell," it follows, therefore, that to seek in ourselves that help, strength, wisdom, or grace, which is alone to be found in Christ, is to add sin to sin. It is despising the good pleasure of Jehovah. It is doing two evils, it is "Forsaking the Fountain of living waters, and hewing out to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water! But then, the difficult questions instantly arise, what am I to do? How can I get at the needed help? The only answer I can suggest is that which we find in such passages as these. "If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" "Take therefore no thought for the morrow!" "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God."

"Casting ALL your care upon Him"—mark, my brother, the sweet instruction contained in this precious word. It does not say, being weighed down by an excess of care, and auxiety about a thousand things, so, be sober and vigilant. No, but to be rightly sober, and rightly vigilant, is to be living without care, having cast ALL your care upon Jesus!—for he careth for you. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," (1 Pet. v. 7). It is because the Lord's dear people lose sight of this simple way of "resisting steadfastly in the faith," by casting ALL care and responsibility upon Jesus, that they become a prey to unbelief, and their own carnal reasonings; and thereby Satan obtains advantage over them, and brings them into confusion and dismay.

But now, look at the subject in another light. We read, that, "It is through MUCH tribulation we must enter the kingdom," and again, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." It follows then, that it is right that we should have cares daily, and hourly to cast upon Jesus! And our vigilance and soberness, should lead to the question, where cast I my care. It is by such means we become acquainted with His fulness, His wisdom, His mercy, His compassion; and therefore it is in this way the saddest of our sufferings work together for good, and issue in our growth in grace, and in the

knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us, however, now bring these observations, somewhat closer to our subject, as referring to our fellowship with the blessed "Man

of Sorrows" in his sufferings.

In previous lectures we have looked into his sufferings in BODY and in MIND. We now have to consider the sufferings of His holy SOUL. And here I feel it will be only possible to stand and gaze at the deep mystery, for its fathomless abyss we can never enter. We begin with those sufferings, which He passed through, in TEMPTATION, as it is written "For in that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted," (Heb. ii. 18).

Here again, my brother, it is necessary for us to clearly understand how it is that we as new creatures in Christ Jesus have fellowship with Him while we suffer being tempted. A man of the world does not suffer in his soul when temptations occupy his thoughts and work upon his natural mind. No. His self-respect may be wounded sometimes when he discovers how wicked a heart he has; and so, likewise, the dead professor, while he can keep a fair outside, is not troubled about the working of the dreadful law of sin in the

members, under the influence of temptation. There it is, in all its virulence, but the Pharisee is dead; therefore, he cannot feel it. It is the new-man. It is that in the child of God which is born from above—the holy life of God in the soul—which suffers, or enables us to suffer, under the daily and hourly temptations to which we are exposed during our little journey through this our hour of temptation and darkness. Here, however, is the blessedness of the subject, my brother. If we suffer being tempted, we know that we are following our adorable Christ in the Regeneration: and if so, we know that we are passed from death unto life; and then, to crown the whole, we know, as the Holy Comforter opens the dear truth to our renewed minds, that the life into which we have passed by regeneration, is ETERNAL LIFE; and that which is eternal can never be lost or cease to exist, so that it is impossible for one of these little ones to perish. "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." "Oh," says little-faith, "that I could but know that I am one of the Shepherd's lambs." It is as simple as it is to know that you are alive naturally! It is only to his sheep that He gives this eternal life, therefore if you have the life, you may be certain you are one of his sheep! Moreover, you cannot SUFFER being tempted if you have not spiritual life: so that, if you can appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that you do in very deed suffer thus daily, say whatever men or devils may to the contrary, you are undoubtedly eternally alive in Christ Jesus. But again observe that it is written, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This is that living spiritual fear which makes a child of God dread, abhor, and recoil from sin, although he finds he carries it about in him, go where he may; and it is because we have this fear, that in and under all temptations we suffer. But where is this fear lodged? is it in the flesh? No. The flesh knows nothing of any fear but a slavish fear, which causes a man to tremble indeed, but it is only because the flesh dreads the sure consequences of the sin, which otherwise it would delight to wallow in. God's own children know this by daily experience; for while on the one hand the pure fear of the Lord stands as a stanch champion against the wiles of sin in every shape, that sneaking reptile of a thing, the slavish fear of the rod, may often be heard to whisper under the folds of his monkish cowl of mock sanctity, "I wish it were lawful!" Ah, my brother, these things make us put our mouths in the dust! A feeling of this, and a knowledge of the unchanged nature of the flesh, will make a child of God humble, and keep him so. But, blessed be our ever loving Jesus, while the development of these things must cause us to abhor ourselves, a knowledge of our standing in eternal life in Him, and that in this life is lodged that other holy godly fear which is called "a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death," (Prov. xiv. 27.) The very appearance of that which calls this holy fear up, to stand upon its guard, furnishes us with an ever-present evidence, that we are among God's living family. It is clear that this true fear of the Lord is not lodged in the flesh, but is one of

the living properties of the new-man.

I am the more desirous, if the Lord will, that dear little-faith may clearly perceive the nature and distinction which is manifested in the operation of these two fears; because, in these are so clearly seen the distinct existence of Two NATURES in a child of God, and I know, my brother, that you will never settle down in any degree of comfortable assurance, until you have had your spiritual senses exercised, so as to be able clearly to discern between the working of the "good," holy, pure, new, and heaven-born nature which you get, when, at regeneration, you are "Created in Christ Jesus;" and the "evil," dead, carnal, sensual, and devilish nature which you brought into the world with you as a child of fallen Adam; as Paul expresses it, (Heb. v. 14,) "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, (margin, perfect-perfect in knowledge by the ministry of the Spirit) even those who by reason of use, (or, margin, habit, or perfection-of teaching by the Spirit) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Slavish fear or fleshly fear, is to Love SIN; but to tremble at the consequences. But "the fear of the Lord is to HATE EVIL," (Prov. viii. 13.) Now, my brother, the Lord the Spirit help you to put things in their right places. I know you will tell me there is a something in you that loves sin, and yet that trembles like a criminal, lest a severe rod should be laid up to chastise you for your backslidings in thought, word, and deed. "Yes," say you, "it is so, and this often causes me to fear I have no part or lot in the matter." This is thy slavish fleshly fear at work. But now mark, it does not work alone! There is another fear, as distinctly discernable as the fleshly fear, which, whatever may be going on, is always present, and always resolutely taking part in the affairs of man's soul. This fear is not trembling at the rod, but rather saying,

"Just his judgments, fit his rod, To correct my folly!"

This fear says, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him!" This fear is saying, "I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love!" This fear was manifested

in David, who, after the prophet had told him that God had put away his sin, yet in his bitter hatred to evil, and abhorrence of himself on account of it, cried out "Create in me a clean heart. O God." "The fear of the Lord is clean." "And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not the Holy Spirit from me." What do we trace in this prayer of David's? Does it not contain a confession, that, although he knew his sin was pardoned, yet he felt there was a something in his wicked heart that loved sin still? This was the true effect of the presence of godly fear. But what was it that made David so anxious about Uriah, and put him upon his various and cruel expedients to hide his guilt? This was not godly fear, which hated evil! but that abominable slavish fear which loves the sin, but trembles at the consequences. Now David telt, even while precious godly fear was in the ascendant, that this slavish fear was still sneaking in his heart, therefore, he cries thus earnestly for a "clean heart." is it not thy daily and hourly cry, my brother? I know, as thou art born from above, it must be so. But the Lord help thee to mark this one most important point, upon a right understanding of which thy comfort, in the midst of thy daily conflicts, depends. The contention within my troubled breast arises from the constant contrary actings of these two fears. The one-slavish fear-loves sin, would slink into the dark to hide it, would soften it down, palliate it, call it a little one, an infirmity, would persuade thee that the harsh utterance of rancorous feeling is honesty, that covetousness is prudence, and pride decency, all the time trembling like a thief, lest it be unmasked. While the other-godly fear-hating sin with an unconquerable hatred, brings it to the light, confesses it, and instead of attempting to cover it, cries with unflinching energy, "Search me O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," (Psal. cxxxix. 23.)

What shall we then say to these things? Every spiritual man knows and groans daily under the contrary workings of these two opposites. If thou canst trace both these active properties at work within thee, my brother, ask thyself this question, "Doth a fountain send forth AT THE SAME PLACE sweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt-water and fresh," (James iii, 11.) It cannot be. It follows then—and this is what will make the very bitters sweet to thee—that there are two distinct and irreconcileable natures within thee. The one is the subject of slavish fear, the

other is the subject of godly fear. But now observe the blessedness. While the slavish sin-loving fear belongs to the old man, who is corrupt and in league with and has the mind of the Devil, the precious sin-hating godly fear belongs to the "NEW MAN which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him!" (Col. iii. 10), and to have this in us proves that we are "joined to the Lord and one Spirit;" and therefore that "we have the mind of Christ." For this very fear, is that which Christ himself had, and which in the midst of his temptation caused him to suffer, being

tempted.

It is written of our adorable "Man of sorrows," that "he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Luther renders this "He was tempted on all sides;" probably referring to the infinite varieties of temptation which Satan in his malice caused to bear upon him. With us he needs not take so much pains, he finds he has only to obtain permission to sift a Peter, and shipwreck must follow, if it were not that we have a blessed Advocate, who ever maketh intercession for us, that our faith fail not. But although on every side he brought his engines of assault to bear upon Christ. vet, there he stood, unshaken. Without sin! nevertheless not without suffering! "For he himself hath suffered being tempted." This holy property of godly fear shone in all its perfection in the person of Christ. "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that HE FEARED." Now, my brother, this is the blessedness of a knowledge of Christ as our "Man of sorrows." He had no slavish fear, but He had permanently that holy fear which made communion with his Father most precious. "But he was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." Who shall say what were the hidings of the face of the Father there! ceived the Father's testimony at the Jordan, and had now entered upon his public ministry. Behold then the first chapter in the sufferings of his soul! It is temptation! How sweetly suitable a companion does a poor tempted child of God find in a suffering tempted Christ! Yes, and godly fear is the key that unlocks the secret of fellowship here. But we must follow out our subject in next lecture.

Let the peace of God RULE in your hearts. Amen.

THE MAN OF SORROWS!

(No. 5.)

" A man of sorrows."-Isaiah liii. 3.

"The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and his children shall have a place of refuge" (Prov. xiv. 26, 27). "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; and he that hath it, shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil" (Prov. xix. 23). "Jehovah is exalted, for He dwelleth on high: He hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure" (Isa. xxxiii. 5, 6). "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor. iv. 7).

What a cluster of precious testimonies we have here, respecting that most precious grace, the fear of the Lord!

"This fear, a rich and endless store
Preserves the soul from pois'nous pride;
The heart that wants this fear is poor,
Whatever it possess beside.

This treasure was by Christ possess'd, In this his understanding stood; And ev'ry one that's with it bless'd Has free redemption in his blood."

My brother! if you have not the full assurance of faith, I know you are saying, "Oh, could I but attain to this most desirable of all mercies, I think I should be content with any cross the Lord should see fit to send me, for all burdens must be lightened by the ever-present conviction and assurance, that Christ is mine, and I am his."

There are some who say, "Away with your frames and feelings! I judge nothing by feeling; I live by naked faith! To judge by feelings, is to judge by sense! and faith and sense are directly opposed to each other!" Now these are broad statements, which pass very glibly over many an unhallowed lip, and often, even when spoken by God's children, wound deeply the precious lamb in Christ's fold. I do not say that all who adopt such language are chargeable with error, in what they intend by what they say, but the phrases they use do not express the meaning they intend to convey.

THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 39.

I would ask such, whether they are able to LOVE without feeling it? or FEAR without feeling it? "To the word, and to the testimony?" "Thus saith the Lord;" "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE" (Gal. v. 6). From this we gather that there cannot be TRUE FAITH—the faith of God's elect—where LOVE is unknown—then since there can be no love without feeling, so there can be no true faith without feeling! Therefore, to cry out. "Away with your frames and feelings," is to contradict the rule laid down by the infallible Teacher in the Church of God. But observe with me, my brother, love in the heart, is the cause of two very opposite kinds of feeling. The highest joy of which a child of God is capable, is that which arises in his soul, from the shedding abroad of the love of God in his heart. The joy of heaven itself will arise from the full tide of love which shall then ever flow as we gaze upon, and commune with, our all-glorious Christ. Now, what many good men mean by saying what they do, amounts merely to this, "Away with your conclusions as to your acceptance with God. drawn from the presence or absence of these joyous frames and feelings" so far, to be judging by frames and feelings, is a most delusive thing, and must lead to wrong conclusions, because the brightest child of God in existence, finds the number of his days of darkness to be many. But then, if TRUE LOVE, and TRUE FAITH working by that love, is in his heart, that child of God finds love fills him with feelings of PAIN, as palpable as were his feelings of joy. whenever the object of his love is out of sight. Or, what does the Psalmist mean by saying, "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled." And again, "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved."-Have you not often said so too, my brother? How came it to pass -" Jehovah, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong?"—The sweet presence of Jesus caused the heart to overflow with confident joy-faith working by love-that all was eternally secure in his glorious Person and fulness-but He withdrew the favour of his presence—" Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." But what caused the trouble? Love! "Oh no," say some, "It was unbelief." I deny it. I know what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, with a faith as unshaken as I can desire. yes, to believe I am Christ's, and He is mine, while at the same time I am in my feelings bitterly mourning his absence! Hungering after Him with intense desire—opening my parched mouth, and panting after his precious presence, more than the hart panteth after the water-brook. Is there no feeling here? No faith? No love?

It is all faith! all love! just like that which filled the heart of the dear woman who pressed through the croud, crying, " If I may but touch the hem of his garments, I shall be whole!" Faith and love were working together here. But contentment did not follow until the trembling, yet mighty hand of faith was laid upon his Person. then virtue flowed out, and she exchanged her longing frame, for that of one of the Lord's Naphtali's, "Satisfied with favour, full with the blessings of the Lord." Go to her, as she is pressing onward, say to her, "Woman, away with your frames and feelings; naked faith is all you need; give over your earnest strivings." What would she say to you? "Sir, I must touch Him for myself! He contains my cure! faith points Him out as the Object, and love fills me with deep need of his precious virtue, which can alone flow through a living touch!" Press on, my troubled brother! deep as thy misery may sometimes be, if thy heart is attracted to Him by what faith has listened to, respecting the Person of Jesus, love is working in all thy sorrows. He is coming to thee with a heart full of tenderness! Ten thousands of mountains shall not stop his pro-Yea, though they be mountains of sin, or a mountain of adamant on thy heart, which all thy tears can never melt, He will come leaping upon the mountains, and they shall all flow down into one sea of love and gratitude, at his presence. No. Whereever there is true faith working by love, there is not a moment but spiritual frames and feelings of some kind, either jealousy working at times rebellion, hardness which in its effects are dreadful-or, desire which earnestly watches in darkness, for the first streak of precious sun-light in the far east, with an eagerness which LOVE alone can understand. Such know David's meaning, where he says. "I wait for the Lord."—" What," says Satan, "you hard-hearted wretch, talk about waiting for the Lord?"-" Yes," says the living, loving one, "My sour waiteth." My brother, mark the blessedness! it is not a fleshly waiting! it is repeated to point out that it is the new-man who waits-" My soul DOTH wait, and in his word do I hope." What word? "I will see you again!" "My soul waiteth, for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say more than they that watch for the morning." If this is not true feeling; yes, and faith working by love, I know not what is! But furthermore there can be no fear without feeling, just as

But furthermore there can be no fear without feeling, just as there can be no other emotion of the sensibilities of the soul. And thus it is, under the teaching of the Spirit of God, we come to the knowledge, that if we can trace these two properties of spiritual life—FEAR and LOVE—at work in our souls, under any of their very

various forms and operations, they become to us witnesses of our union to Christ, and of our fellowship with Him in his sufferings; as it is written again, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." But what is it in the brethren that we love? certainly not that in them which is born of the flesh, for in many cases we have to deplore the presence of natural infirmities and dispositions which make them far from loveable; but it that which is born of the Spirit in them, namely, the image of Christ, who is formed in them, the hope of glory. So that in loving them, as new-creatures in Christ, it is in the truth loving Christ Himself. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Hence, observe, my brother, it is a mistake to suppose that the full assurance of faith exempts from suffering; indeed I think the experience of the Lord's family tells an exactly opposite story, namely, the stronger the faith, the hotter the conflict. The Lord does not give his people faith to lay up in store, but as their day is,

so is their supply of strong faith to carry them through it.

Our most glorious "Man of sorrows" was infinitely perfect in all these spiritual properties, take especially those of LOVE and of FEAR. yet He suffered, being tempted. He knew perfectly all about the circumstances through which He had to pass before they began, and He knew as perfectly the certainty of their issue in his own complete triumph. In what way, and to what extent the manhood of Christ suffered in his temptations, we can never fully understand: but we have a very simple clue to the nature of his sufferings in the contemplation of our own sorrows, which proceed from the same cause. As we have already seen, it is as new-creatures we have fellowship with Christ in all that He suffered. It is the new-man in us. who. though undefiled by the temptation, yet groans, and struggles, and cries, in, and under temptation. As to the old-man, the Adam-nature in us, he is defiled indeed, yea, he only suffers, because, rebel as he is, he cannot, now that grace reigns, have his own way. This may seem at first sight, to make the sufferings of the child of God greater than those of his adorable Master; but not so. He had not the vile body of death to carry, in the way in which we have, but He had the ever-present knowledge of the power that such temptations as He suffered from, would, and must exercise upon the soul of his beloved bride. As we contemplate our blessed Lord thus. with his tender, compassionate heart, which has never known a selfish feeling, at all times conscious that He was passing through those fires of temptation, for the treble purpose that He might conquer the enemy of his bride; work out an obedience for his bride; and become perfect in knowledge of her sufferings, so as to be able to fill his blessed office of sympathizing High-Priest, touched with a feeling of the infirmities of his bride; always learning in mind, that that precious word applies to Him under every circumstance into which He came as our Surety, as fully as it does to every position He occupies as our glorious Mediator. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Oh, my brother, to take our stand to-day by the side of our most glorious "Man of Sorrows," as we find Him in the wilderness, "tempted of the devil," believing, that even then, his heart's love was causing Him to say to Himself at every step, this is what my little ones must pass through! it is to this my bride must be exposed! I say, to dwell upon Him, as going over the history, we behold every fiery shaft hurled against his holy impregnable soul, and at the same time to realize, that in the mighty grasp of his omniscient perception of all things which should ever happen, He bore thyself upon his heart, and there and then treasured up for thee the remembrance of all that was bitter in his sufferings, that He might be able to succour thee in thy hour of temptation, by conveying into thy tempest-tossed soul, by the sweet anointings of the Holy Comforter, the precious assurance that He had passed through all before thee, that, in all, He may feel for, deliver, and comfort thee-does it not make Him most precious? My dear brother, we lose ninetenths of the comfort of all that is written in the precious Gospel, concerning our most glorious Christ, by forgetting the blessed truth at every line in the history, that we, personally, were present with Him then! Trace Him where you may, still it is your privilege, dear little-faith, to say, "He thought of me here! He was thinking of me there!" Who shall calculate the blessedness of thus realizing the glorious fact, that, not only in time, but from all that can be taken into the mind of eternity past, there has not been a moment, but his thoughts have been fixed upon, and exercised about the feeblest lamb in all his fold?

What infidels are we in our fleshly conceptions of the glorious "Man of sorrows!" When in the wilderness tempted of the devil, He was as truly the mighty God as when He set a compass upon the face of the depth, and meted out the heavens with His marvellous span! Couldst thou realize this grand truth daily, my tempted, exercised, bewildered brother, how sweetly wouldest thou fall down into His Almighty arms, in all thy perplexities, saying, "Dear Jesus, thou didst once pass through fiery temptations when in thy doleful suffer-

ings in the wilderness thou didst meet our common enemy, and thou didst in thy foreknowledge think of a poor worm whom thou hadst received to redeem, who should follow thee in the Regeneration, and as the temptation was thrust sore at thee, and thou didst see that although thou couldst turn its point, yet that thy poor and needy one would be wounded and smitten down to the ground thereby, yet thou didst in the love of thy heart, say then, "Certainly I will be with thee." Now precious Lord Jesus, "do as thou hast said," "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly," lift up the light of thy countenance upon me and give me peace. I am that poor worm,

"I can do nothing without thee Make haste, my God, make haste."

We may rest assured that as in all points He was tempted, there is not a temptation into which we come, but He himself has passed through it before us, especially his foreknowledge thereof. He knows all about it, and DELIGHTS to come forth by the Spirit to succour his tempted ones.

But what is temptation? Here again we make great mistakes, James says, "My brother, count it ALL JOY when ye fall into divers temptations," (James i. 2.) The very heart of a child of God shudders sometimes at the thought of temptation, as a "Burnt child dreads the fire;" but our view of things in a general way is defec-Every trial, whether in mind, body, or estate, becomes a temptation to a child of God. The Lord has said "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." How? By acting in all times of need, according to His most blessed instructions, "Take no thought for your life—either spiritual or temporal—what ve shall eat, or what ve shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." But rather, "casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you." Now look at thy daily cares, my brother! I know the more you think about it, the more fully you will agree with me, that every circumstance, however minute it be, viewed as it really is, as an affair that does not belong to thee, but to thy glorious Head and Husband, becomes a snare and a trap to thee, and therefore a temptation. Is it not so? How dost thou wake in the morning to an anxious day, as though all depended upon thine own wisdom, prudence, and perseverance! thou bowest the knee it is true, and in confession, telleth the Lord HE MUST DO ALL AND SUSTAIN ALL. but where is thy heart all this time? Is it not rushing forward over the manifold occupations of the day, as though thou must not waste too much time at the throne of grace? If a sweet passage in the word drops into thine heart, dost thou not hear a monitor say, "Come

come, ye are idle! ye are idle! diligent in business! so and so will be before you, you will be robbed here or there, such and such matters are pressing, Haste! Haste! Time is cash!" Ah, my brother, these are common things, but in all, the world may call it prudence, but the living child of God finds it is TEMPTATION.

I would here beg the holy Comforter to fix it upon the hearts of the Lord's dear children, that ALL their daily affairs are more or less temptations. They all bring them into need of divine wisdom, strength, and guidance, yet they all tend to bustle them into a forgetfulness of their blessed relationship to Jesus, their own and only true friend and Almighty helper, that they may fall into Satan's trap of fleshly prudence, than which there is nothing which works the dear children of God more tribulation.

What then can James mean by saying, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations?" Read, on my brother, through the next verse, "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience," which perhaps may be best paraphrased thus, "That the trying of your faith worketh by your own constant failures in sell a patient hanging upon the dear Lord for all needed strength, wisdom, and grace." It is a joyful thing to be brought off self, and to come, by the ministry and teaching of the Spirit, to the condition of a new-born babe, and this is done by the fiery trial of our faith, which burns up all SELF-HELP and convinces us that Christ is all, and first and last IN all!

But then, how blessed is it to gather from this view of things, that it is not only in what the worldly professor, yea, and many of the Lord's own people, call our pious moments, we have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, but it is to be found in EVERY CIRCUM-STANCE through which we have to pass, that brings affliction or anxiety into the mind. Nothing short of a feelingly experimental knowledge of this will bring us into such a sweet intimacy with Christ, as to live under the precious apprehension of that most wonderful declaration of His, "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered!!!"

Our space will not admit of your going circumstancially through the temptations of our blessed "Man of Sorrows." This must be left to the future. But in confirmation of what we especially desire if the Lord will, to impress upon the minds of the Lord's dear littlefaiths, namely, that it is into their every day life, in ALL their cares, they are to carry this blessed doctrine of fellowship, (even in these little things) with Christ in his sufferings, their daily comfort must be sought.

His temptations commenced with fasting. When is it, my brother, your cares press most heavily upon you? Is it not when the bridegroom is taken away? you fast in those days! all the fleshly expedients in the world are of no avail. The spring is shut up, the fountain is sealed! "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights he was afterwards an hungered," (Matt. iv. 2,) we must not confine this, however, to spiritual fasting only; both in providence and grace, the Lord's people travel through these foot-prints of their glorious "Man of Sorrows." Jacob when about to meet his brother Esau, had a long fasting time before the Lord came down to deliver. and during his fast, it is quite clear the enemy was at work upon his natural mind, for he was seeking in his prudence the preservation of his jewels. Still, however, we see in him a type of all the followers of the Lamb, having exhausted all his own devices, having looked over all the stones in the wilderness in the hour of his temptation, he found the preciousness of that truth, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." While Jacob was arranging his family, his flocks and his herds, he was passing through his days and his nights of fasting, but when it came to the last he hungered after a living word! My brother, is it not just the same still? "He hungered." Then comes Satan like a flood upon the poor tempest-tossed soul with his mighty IFS! "If thou be the Son of God."

But I pause a moment. Dear little faith, who knows better than thyself, the nature of fellowship with "the Man of Sorrows" here, if thou art a child of God? The Lord help thee to see that thy loving Head has been through these very footsteps, for the express purpose that He may understand thy dejected look, when in the midst of a fiery storm of these potent IFS thou art compelled to lay hold upon Him, and like Jacob of old say, in the desperation of thy sinking soul, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

But now observe, my brother, It is quite clear to your mind that the Lord brought Jacob into that strait for the express purpose of manifesting his love to him. Did Jacob know at the time it was thus designed for his especial blessing? No, He was as perplexed as thou art, as much in the dark as thou art. But he was brought to this blessed point, and thou must follow in the same footsteps to get the same blessing.

"Other refuge have I none Hangs my helpless soul on thee."

But we must pass over to next lecture. His peace be with you.

Amen.

THE MAN OF SORROWS!

(No. 6.)

" A man of sorrows."—Isaiah liii. 3.

THE great condescension of our adorable Mediator, in veiling his glory, that he might stoop into the very condition and circumstances through which His beloved bride had to pass in her wilderness journey, is no where more strongly manifested than in His How deep His soul sufferings were while under the temptation. infliction of this necessary portion of his appointed misery, can only be conceived by taking into the account, the infinite holiness of His Person, which had to remain for this season of conflict, alone. and unsupported, but by his own holiness, in contact—though undefiled thereby—with the father of lies—the very embodiment of sin, his own most implacable enemy. It was infinite love which moved him thus to come so low, but the very love which moved him to his undertaking, joined as it was by infinite knowledge of the bitter steps his Bride must pass through in following him, added acuteness to the sting of his sorrows. Yet all this was necessary for Him to pass through, that He might obtain His great glory, so is it also necessary for His members to follow Him, that they too may be glorified together with Him. It is while we mourn over a suffering Jesus, knowing that all He suffered was on our behalf. that we enter into communion with Him as our "Man of Sorrows," and reflect back again, through the medium of love, those soft rays of sympathy, which caused him to look forward with tender compassion then over the map of his Bride's wilderness-warfare. But how precious is it to be reminded by the dear Comforter while we suffer now, that the perfect obedience of our most glorious Christ to His God and Father, during his hour, and power of temptation, has eternally neutralized the poison contained in every cup of sorrow the tempter is permitted to mix for us! Listen, my brother! to the precious testimony of our risen Saviour, which he left as a parting consolation to the tempted. "If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." Nevertheless, the bitters become ten thousand times more offensive to a living, spiritually minded child of God, the more fully he becomes established in this truth. Wherever it is not so, the absence of a growing hatred to sin, points to notions in the head, and a conscience seared, but not to the holy mind of Christ in a broken heart.

Still, gazing at the "Man of Sorrows" passing through His soulsufferings in the temptation in the wilderness, we proceed to observe; [The Gospel Cottage Lecturer, No. 40. that, it is like Him the Lord's dear family, are LED by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.

What did you know, my brother, about temptation, and the bitterness of it, until you were baptized into Christ? that is, made a new-creature in Him. Like Israel of old, they were brought up out of Egypt, baptized unto Moses in the Red Sea, then led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, what for? Read the eighth of Deuteronomy, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God LED thee, these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart and he humbled thee—what so humbling, my brother, as the discoveries made to us of what is in our hearts, when under the power of temptation?—and suffered thee to hunger."

nunger. Israel

Israel's wilderness wanderings typified the spiritual experience of God's people. Christ fasted forty days, and was suffered to hunger. Does not this point to the forty years' wanderings of his fasting people in their experience here also? His was a concentration of suffering at every step. Who shall say, how great, and how terrible were the sufferings of our fasting Surety, as he thus in forty days went over, and passed through a series of temptations, "In all points," or "from all sides," like unto his people? The Lord the Spirit help thee to realize the encouraging thought, my brother, that in all thine afflictions he was then afflicted. It was for thy sake he passed through all. He bore thee then, and carried thee as one of his crown jewels laid up in his heart. And thinkest thou that now, when he beholds thine anxious imploring eve turned up to him, in the depth of thy distress, while "for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," his tender heart is less full of pity and compassion towards thee? Are you ready to say, "Then if it be so, and he has almighty power to deliver, how is it he does not come down and scatter my enemies, and give me peace? especially as I can appeal to him, that I cry night and day to him for help, always groaning, being burdened; yet, morning by morning I rise from my bed, often weary with a night tossing, and instead of bringing deliverance. He seems to meet me sternly at the throne of grace, and in answer to every plea, mutely POINTS TO THE WELL-KNOWN CROSS!" Yes, dear brother! It must be so. This is your hour of temptation. You can plainly see there was a "NEED" in the case of His sufferings, "ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" and there is enough in that bitter rising of rebellion or that stubborn sullenness with which you so frequently bew down to "take up your cross," to prove that there is a deep meaning in those words, "Though now, for a season, IF NEED BE, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations." But does he not give you strength equal to your day? Yes. Do you deserve it? Oh, my brother! well may we hide our faces in shame before him, when we contemplate His willingness to suffer such a concentration of misery for us, and contrast therewith our complainings under a little needful chastening. But here is our sweet remedy, as the Holy Comforter opens the dear subject, and brings us into the wilderness to hold communion with our glorious "Man of Sorrows," as, for our sakes, He fasted forty days, yes, and forty nights too-He knows thy deep exercises in thy night watches! The Lord help thee, then, instead of counting over thy cares, as in sleepless tossings thou are called to follow Him in fellowship, remembering that ALL THY CARES BECOME TEMPTATIONS TO THEE, because of the corruption of thy heart, to go in all simplicity to Him, as a companion in tribulation, in the wilderness, "casting all your care upon him," asking him not so much to remove thy heavy cross, as to open sweet communion with thee, by giving thee a faith's view of Himself, suffering for thee all the penalty, and drinking all the poison of thy sin, in temptation, that thou mayest only have to suffer from a sense of sin's bitterness, in order that it may become to thee daily more and more hateful. Then thou shalt understand the testimony of the apostle James, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

But furthermore, to show that the sufferings of Christ in His holy soul during his temptations, were such a concentration of the wilderness soul-sufferings of His people which they are called to pass through as followers of Him in the regeneration, we look now particularly into the three great temptations which sum up the whole; and in which our adorable Mediator together with his Church in him, is proclaimed Satan's eternal conqueror! We find in these three temptations a regular gradation, pointing out the order and succession of those soul conflicts to which the spiritual family of God are subject, more or less in their experience of growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This view of our fellowship with "The Man of Sorrows," as the Holy Comforter sweetly applies it, will tend to lift up the soul in the midst of the growing conflict, and still show us that, in that we suffer in soul, being tempted, we so suffer, because we belong to Christ. But also, that He knows the nature of every fresh attack of the enemy, and therefore is ever ready to succour.

"And when he had fasted forty days, and forty nights, he was AFTERWARDS an hungered." Satan now comes in like a flood! Christ knew that He was now the proclaimed head of his body the Church; He knew that it was the FATHER'S WILL that He should be tempted on all sides like his brethren; He knew therefore, that into whatever straits he came, to deliver himself therefrom at the suggestion of Satan, was to act contrary to His Father's will. He knew that He had come forth to SUFFER, according to, and all, the will of the Father, and therefore the Father's will. It was in suffering these, and not by escaping out of them, he was obedient to that will. And is it not so with us, my brother? It is when the TRIAL OF OUR FAITH has wrought PATIENCE, that we look upon the cross with a smile and say, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth good in his sight."

"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Now mark, Christ was in the wilderness, He had come up from his baptism, the Holy Ghost had descended upon Him, and a voice from heaven had proclaimed Him to be the Son of God! How was it with thee, my brother, when spiritual life entered into thy soul? The Egypt of this world was no longer a home to thee. Thou wert thrust out in haste, the devil pursued thee, but he could not earry thee back. The Spirit of life entered into thy soul, spoiled the strong man armed, and took eternal possession of thy heart.

Ah, my brother; how little do the Lord's dear ones know what a glorious change is wrought in their condition when they come to this wonderful baptism!* From this point they are led up of the

^{*} Once for all, knowing how many of the Lord's dear children are "strict Baptists," although I cannot at all see with them, yet believing we are all one in Christ Jesus, I desire never to mention the word "Baptism" in a controversial way. The bitterness and strife which has been raised from time to time out of this question, fills my soul with grief. Whichever side the mistake may be, Jehovah, in his sovereignty, has permitted it to exist among His own BLOOD-BOUGHT PEOPLE until now. As to the potsherd professors, glittering in their silver dross (Prov. xxvi. 23), I care not a rush what they quarrel about; but for the living members of the ONE GLORIOUS BODY, to be shy of each other, because they cannot sit at the same table, will always-while it lasts-be a source of deep sorrow to my heart, and I cannot help saying, Brethren, these things cught not to be! At all events I pray the dear Comforter to keep my pen, and my lipa from ever feeding this fire of discord. The dear apostle's prayer be mine! "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted, and grounded IN LOVE, may be able to comprehend WITH ALL SAINTS, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; THAT YE MIGHT BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD."

Spirit to be tempted of the devil, and into the wilderness they go. Now, "They wander in the wilderness in a solitary way—feeling no longer fit for the world, and afraid to claim privilege and companionship with the Lord's family, they find no city to dwell in! Hungry, and thirsty, their souls faint within them." It is not far the new-born soul wanders before he begins to feel piercing hunger, "Blessed are they which do hunger, and thirst after righteousness!" It is for righteousness they hunger. They feel like the prodigal. that they have spent all their substance in riotous living. now in want, and no man can give unto them! Ah, my poor tempted hungry brother! The same tender love which has allured thee, and brought thee into the wilderness condition, if thou art still here. though famine and dark desolation reigns around thee, and within thee, too, yet has sent a Joseph, thine own dear elder brother, to provide bread enough and to spare. Fear not, He is leading by a right way. In the midst of the wilderness, among the stones, thou shalt find a blessed dwelling place, even thy Bethel!—thy house of bread!

No sooner does a living soul begin to hunger, and to seek for the living bread, than the STONES appear. Now Satan begins, "If thou art a child of God, let these stones be thy bread." With what power and authority does the tempter set upon the trembling soul! The stones of Sinai must be wrought into bread! The living starving one cries out, "What must I do to be saved?" "Keep the law!" says the tempter. The stones must become bread! The poor child looks at the fiery mountain, the thunders utter their voices, and every peal of the trumpet, and the voice of words, mock the astonished wanderer by echoing back the demand, "that the stones be made bread!" Yes, my dear brother, and you shall feed even upon the bread of Sinai yet! Thy Joseph has stood upon that fearful mountain, and gathered up the fragments of that broken covenant, cemented each particle in perfect unity with his own blood, and written the whole, with a thousand-fold more that is most blessed, upon the living fleshy tables of thy new, though contrite heart. So that henceforth, as the Spirit shall open up the divine secret of thy fellowship with the blessed "Man of Sorrows" in his sufferings, thou shalt take thy harp and sing a new gospel song, for thou shall feed sweetly upon the stones of Sinai, transformed into the bread of Calvary, singing,

"And in the wounds of Jesus slain,
"Tis sweet to read the law."

We see all this beautifully figured forth in the case of the prodi-

gal. He was in the wilderness, and he hungered. His heart yearned after his father's bread, He thought to serve for it, and declared he would say, "make me as one of thy hired servants!" What could cause his heart thus to yearn after his home? It was sonship, as it is written, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart, crying, Abba Father." Every desire of the hungry prodigal cried Abba! Abba! and every pang of hunger whispered abba! Bread! bread! It is even so still, my brother! Now mark the blessedness of the circumstance! "If a son shall ask pread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?"

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much mere shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit wato them that ask him?"

The Lord help thee, thou poor hungering one, to arise and go home with the prodigal, and witness the fulfilling of thy fellowship with Christ, as he runs, a servant's bread, was upon his lip. But behold now the answer which Jesus makes to the tempter! "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." How did the prodigal live, after his father met him? The bread was blessed, but the tender love of the father's heart, and the tender kisses of his mouth, as he received him safe and sound into his bosom, were more to him than his bread, it made him forget this speech about a servant's lowly position. And so my brother beloved, when thou comest into the banquetting house, and beholdest thyself arrayed in the spotless robe, where theu beholdest the fatted calf, the golden ring, and the gospel shoes, and above all the joyful smile upon thy Father's brow ; thou shalt then shout for joy, that thou wert led ur-mark, it is all up, although in thy feelings it may seem like going down-into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. But thy great joy shall flow from the precious knowledge that Jesus, "The Man of Sorrows," was for thee, and with thee, there,

But we pass on now to the second great assault of the tempter on Christ.

"Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If thou be the Son of God, CAST THYSELF DOWN: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." It is clear from the Lord's answer to this, that it was a temptation to presumptuous sin; "Keep back thy servant also, from presumptuous sine," for He replies, "It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The will of God the Father was here again the

rule by which Jesus manifested his obedience. The Holy Ghost by the prophets had proclaimed that will, thus, "Beheld my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." Had Christ then cast Himself down, and so, in a miraculous way, introduced Himself to the Priests and Levites of the temple, He would have acted contrary to the will of his Father; and this also, at the suggestion of the tempter.

Some suppose, moreover, that the tempter incited the Lord to self-murder, suggesting, that if He were the Son of God, He would be rescued by angels. But certainly there was less of probability in this view of the temptation, that it would take effect, than in the other view. For Christ knew his Sonship, and had but recently had full confirmation of it, by the voice from heaven. And besides this, He was not the subject of unbelief as we are, although He was made subject to suffering. Nevertheless, in both these senses we shall do well to hold a moment's fellowship with Christ in his suffer-

ings.

The Lord had met, and overcome the wicked one in his first assault, when He came with his impious "IF." And so in the experience of the Lord's children, the meeting of the poor prodigal, with a loving father in the banqueting house, to feast with him upon the "fatted calf," introduces him into a new state, and renders it necessary for Satan to change his tactics. That arch enemy no longer dreams of pointing to the stones of Sinai, and driving the returned and reconciled prodigal there, for his bread. knows that a sight of the fulfilled and magnified law in the Person of Christ, and the testimony of the Spirit in the heart, that "All are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," teacheth " a young man how to cleanse his way, by taking heed thereto according to thy word!" and that is not by looking to Sinai or to self, but by looking to "Jesus only!" "the WAY, the Truth, and the Life!" It is by living at Bethel, and by returning there like poor Naomi, that we overcome the wicked one; namely, by going out to battle day by day, full of living bread, and returning empty, and hungry, and bitterly needy; saying, call me no longer Naomi, "the pleasant one," but "Mara, the bitter one; for I went out full, but the Lord hath brought me home AGAIN empty." And this, I presume to think, is to be living as a young man should live, in Christ. "I write unto you young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one."

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds." And well for us it is so, or some of the many pinnacles on to which the devil carries us after we have returned to Bethel in peace, must be our ruin after all. And I doubt not many a dear brother sighs, and says, "Ah, if you knew some of the strong holds or presumptuous pinnacles, where I sometimes find myself, perhaps you would not talk so freely about these great and glorious matters as you do." My brother! I tell you plainly where I have learned all my choicest lessons, and vet if my own feelings were consulted, I should never set my feet within that most humbling circle more. It is called by the Psalmist—and well he knew the fullness of its meaning—"WITS END." If I speak freely, it is because, by the Lord's mercy, I am so often compelled against my own proud will, to give up the struggle, and like a straw in a whirl-pool, follow the current round and round till I come to the centre again-", WITS' END!"-and what is it? No-THINGNESS! EMPTINESS! BARRENNESS! VILENESS! But it is just here where I have my precious moments of fellowship with my allglorious Man of Sorrows. Here I learn to prize his wisdom! His riches! His fulness! His fruitfulness! His righteousness, and his precious grace! It is then I can see for a little season, that "All things are working together for good!" It is then I can triumph in my own weakness and folly, that the God of my salvation may be exalted!

And now, my brother, as I must talk about the pinnacles in next lecture, allow me to add, that while you can make any headway by your own strength, against the current that is setting in stronger and stronger daily, against all your own efforts, to bring you to this centre of helplessness, you will not enter into rest. Nevertheless, struggle on! the harder you toil, the sooner will you faint, and have no might! then Jesus will appear with power and strength.

His precious peace be with you. Amen.

THE MAN OF SORROWS!

(No. 7.)

"A man of sorrows."—Isaiah liii. 3.

THE Lord's dear children are not permitted to travel far from the banquetting house before a stranger meets them! Beware, my brother! you are near a pinnacle!

It will save the pilgrim many a pang, and remove very much of his perplexity in his daily watchfulness over his wayward heart, when by the Spirit's enlightening, he is enabled habitually to contemplate himself, as he really is, a two-fold, double-natured creature. I do not mean merely to acknowledge the truth, but to be living daily understanding it in feeling, by clearly discerning the properties and working of each nature in their developments. We shall then cease to look for figs on the thistle, or grapes on the thorn bush; knowing it is to the living vine, and to the true spiritual fig-tree—both signifying the same thing, namely, the new-creature, even Christ formed in our hearts the hope of glory—that we must look for all divine fruit.

This tabernacle of ours is that in which, and upon which, these two, ever-contending, parties act; and we know by constant experience that "heaviness in the heart of man causeth it to stoop, but a good word maketh it glad." Long spiritual fasting brings down the animal spirits. But a sweet feast day in the banqueting house, revives and cheers the natural frame, as well as the spiritual mind, and often does more to restore natural health than a physician's prescription.

Well does Satan understand this, and therefore, when he sees a dear saint of God come forth out of the king's palace with his face shining with heavenly glory, and his head anointed with fresh oil, tranformed into an angel of light, the tempter nears to him, and begins to puff the noxious fumes of spiritual pride into the prostrate carcase of the old man; until the wretch rises up in his pomp and self-complacency on to a pinnacle indeed! At this point, perhaps, this entangled one meets with some weather-beaten old pilgrim who has been with Jacob at Peniel; since which time, he has gone "halting upon his thigh!" and when he sees the poor old cripple hobbling along with his face care-worn and saddened by inward darkness, Satan whispers—not now with an "If," but—" You are a child of God! Cast thyself down. Let the old creature see what wonderful heights thou hast climbed! tell him not to talk about his darkness or his corruptions, as though the children of God lived all their life long in a tunnel. Tell him that you have learned now that THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 41.

you are always 'Light in the Lord,' and therefore that you have done with such childish nonsense as talking about your misery and deep darkness!"

Ah, my brother! there is more in that old man's sigh and keen gaze that he fixes upon your cheerful countenance than you may at first read. He knows where you are, and whispers as he passes on, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." He knows that the day of adversity is set over against the day of prosperity. And the Lord's living children find to their cost that the pinnacle of spiritual pride lies in the high road that leads from the banqueting house to the dungeon!

There are, however, many pinnacles on to which the tempter carries the child of God: but in connection with every one of which, the glorious Captain of our salvation, having himself gone before, has laid up some remedy exactly suited for the condition of need into which a flight to the top of these fearful places brings the soul.

Spiritual gifts are taken advantage of by Satan, and converted into a pinnacle from which he whispers, "Cast thyself down." Let your brethren see how brightly you shine. But for this there is a remedy to be found in the hidden recesses of an aching heart, in some strong and heavy links of nature's bond chain, which are too weighty for us to lift up and remove, and which therefore constrains the poor groaning, burdened one, though others may sometimes think he soars aloft above all such things, to lie weeping in the dust before his God, crying, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

Great light into the mysteries of God's kingdom is another pinnacle! But here, that no flesh should glory, how many of God's own champions have became entangled with some strange error which the simplest child in God's family smiles at, when he thinks it possible that one so clear in all other points should be so clouded here. Witness the blessed Luther doggedly chalking on his table, "This is my body!"

Profound knowledge, whether such as Paul by his wonderful revelations, or that which some men acquire by the dint of study, becomes a pinnacle. But says Paul, "lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." How precious were the lessons that Paul learned by his thorn! And it is so still. It is in the low shady walks of the valley of humiliation, where the lilies of Jesus blossom in all their simple beauty, and not on the stately pinnacle, or on the lofty heights of the haughty mountain!

A deep experience often becomes a pinnacle, on which a seat of judgment and a throng is reared, the experience itself becomes the idol which fills the throne, and sentence is pronounced from the judgment seat upon all who do not bow to the idol, or come up to its peculiar standard. But justice and judgment are not always the establishment (margin) of this throne, nor do mercy and truth always go before the face of this idol. Many a dear child of God, who has been wafted on to this pinnacle, has sat there in barren state until his soul has become like a parched wilderness, and his conversation like the mountains of Gilboa. The river of the water of life flows. at the foot of the mountain, and the lame who cannot climb, drink of the brook by the way, and so lift up the head! Little faith is in good health if hungry every day, and Zion's living bread is given to these hungry children, by the hand of mercy, "NEW EVERY MORN-ING!"

Self-confidence is another fearfully dangerous pinnacle from which the Lord's people are often invited to cast themselves down. many in our day are the headlong leaps that are taken from this perilous pinnacle, in severe dogmatical plunges into the vortex of prophecy. How unlike the testimony of the holy Man of Sorrows. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven; NEITHER THE Son, but the Father!" (Mark xiii. 32). Beware, my brother, that we go not with a MUL-FITUDE to do evil. Thy daily bread is Christ FORMED in thine heart. Faith delights in the testimony of the Spirit sweetly sealed in a broken and a contrite heart, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are IN HIM that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols!" (1 John v. 20.) I wish to say nothing against prophetic reading in its proper place: but to make it the subject of nine-tenths of my thought and study, would starve my hungry soul. No, nothing short of a present Christ revealed in me by the power and grace of the Holy Comforter, will enable me to come up daily to Paul's precious standard, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," (Phil. iii. 3). A self-righteous spirit is another pinnacle to the top of which the Lord's living ones are sometimes transported. And mark, my brother, they are carried there by the devil! therefore while there, Satan will not stir up the corrupt hell within them, nor fan its fire, but move about them so daintily !- no tossings, no siftings, no buffetings now-one would think the horrid black old man was dead; but there he sits, like a Popish saint, as demure as a nun at her confessions. How they cast themselves down from hence before the poor devil-hunted Publican, who daily trembling under the power of his corruptions, goes continually smiting upon his breast, crying; God be merciful to me a sinner. Yes, the Lord's own people get on to these self-righteous pinnacles; and then, there is one word which you will hear very much upon their lips, You "ought" to do this! you ought not to do that! and many other oughts which: you will find, coming direct as they do from Satan's ice-house, will freeze up your poor little heart, and make you feel as though there was about as much hope for a Judas as for you! They seem so holy, and you feel so vile. But sit down, my brother. are God's living children, you will see the issue. But oh my brother, beware here. The Lord help thee to run to their help with a sweet cordial compounded of love, blood, and salvation, for they will greatly need it; and not to join with their despisers, and say, Ah! Ah! so would we have it, "Pride cometh before the destruction of a sinner; and a HAUGHTY SPIRIT before the FALL of A SAINT."

Moreover, there are many other pinnacles upon which poor little-faith often finds himself, and where he hears the voice of his ever-vigilant foe saying, "Cast thyself down." The high ones of the world frown upon thee because of the truth, thy friends sneer at thee, because of thy strict adherence to God's truth. "Cast thyself down," says the tempter; "how much more pleasant would be thy path!" But no. The root of the matter holds thee fast! Again He comes, saying,—

"Nothing but trouble and exercise have been thy lot since thou hast been from under the yoke of Pharaoh, and thou wilt perish in the wilderness after all. 'Cast thyself down!' go back into the world, and get rid of thy misery." But no! There is the pillar of the cloud, and sometimes at night-time its glory shines forth; and then the wilderness and the solitary place doth blossom as the rose; the remembrance of such moments warms the heart, and hope hears the Holy Comforter whisper, "He will see you again."

That easily-besetting sin which makes you tremble so frequently before your God, suddenly presents itself, and impudently calls upon you to surrender! you dash the monster down and stamp your foot upon his neck! But instantly you find yourself upon a pinnacle in the Holy City! you look round and see the grandeur and the glory of the eternally secure standing you have in covenant security in

the perfections of Christ! In another moment you hear a whisper, "'Cast thyself down.' Ye are complete in him! nothing can alter it, all is secure!" Oh, my brother, what a heart, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked must that be, where such scenes as these, with almost electric rapidity can be enacted! But no! Grace shall reign! and although these sudden assaults may cause a child of God to stagger, where the holy fear of God dwells, that must spring up in an instant as the valiant asserter of the impossibility that such an one can wilfully sin, that grace may abound!

To a pinnacle of desperation is the tried and tempest-tossed child sometimes wrought up, by the recurrence of circumstances, it may be from without, or it may be from the pressure of despair within, so that no way of escape seems to be left open, when like Paul in his shipwreck, "neither sun nor stars in many days appear, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." At the most dismal moment of the soul's distraction, in rushes the tempter, "'Cast thyself down!' If thou art a child of God, some miracle will preserve thee! And if hell must be thy portion after all, the longer thou livest the more does thy penalty increase;" Ah, my poor brother,

When Jonah sank beneath the wave, He thought to rise no more; But God prepared a fish to save, And bear him to the shore!

These are dreary spots to pass over, but even in these thou shalt find afterwards that the blessed "Man of Sorrows" has left his footprints for thee to stand upon. His weapon then be thine, "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Infidelity, especially in this Christ-despising day, proves to be a high pinnacle upon which the tempter will sometimes meet poor little-faith. How cunningly will the deceiver work here, upon the carnal reason, and fleshly sympathies of the bewildered one's heart. How can these things be? How do we know it to be true? and a thousand other thrusts, that if possible He may cast us down. But we wait not long for an answer here, a deep feeling of need compels the living one to cry out,

"Other refuge I have none!"

These are a few of those fearful places which many of the Lord's people are conversant with. But in all, how blessed is it to know, that as the ever blessed "Man of Sorrows," has himself passed through all, he has swallowed up all the substance, and left but the

shadow for us to encounter. Shadows may indeed bring much gloom over the spirit, but they have no power to injure a man in Christ.

But Christ was exposed to a third temptation. And here, to enter fully into fellowship with Jesus, perhaps it is necessary to be a father in Christ. This being the third gradation in the Lord's family. But not reckoning myself more than a learner in these deep things, I shall merely set down a hint or two here.

I think it is true, that covetousness is the sin of old age, and, like

all other lusts, it strengthens by being fed.

The last desperate effort of the tempter with the "Holy Man of Sorrows," is that which he is daily bringing to bear upon God's

people still, with more or less success, especially in old age.

In a vision, in a moment of time, all the greatness, riches, and glory of the world were presented to Christ. And Satan had the consummate impudence to say they were his, whereas, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof!" But "get thee hence, Satan," drove him away.

But now observe, my brother. How often have we to lament over those whom age and long acquaintance with the Lord, has brought very near the borders of the Jordan, and yet there they are, plodding on daily, with a world of care upon their dear old shoulders, as though all the successes connected with the circle in which they move, depended on their wonderful prudence! and exactly as though, the moment they stood still, all the machinery by which they are surrounded must collapse or go to ruin. Again, follow them to their beds, how exactly do we see the old scheme acted over again, in their nightly watchings; here they strive after a little heavenly communion, but quick as lightning, a vision of all the lights and shadows of life rushes in and fills up their thoughts. How an ariel castle is built for this dear one, here another falling one is mourned over or propped up there, until all becomes confusion, then in steps Satan. "There give up thy mind to these things or thou will never make it all sure." Nevertheless, it is a last effort of desperation, for the Lord's aged ones have had enough of falling down to him in days past, and have always proved, that even in these things, he has been a liar from the beginning. For, however well for a time he may keep his word with his own children, if one of the Lord's living family is caught in his trap, he not only finds that he is deceived in his expectation temporally, but also that his tempter is ready to turn upon him as accuser.

However, in all these things, blessed instruction is contained, and although it is connected with deep soul sorrow, yet even this keeps the inscription brightly visible, stamped as it is upon all things belonging to earth. "This is not your rest!" while here, again, it is blessed to draw near daily in the midst of all thy cures, my aged brother, to our adorable High Priest, reminding him of the vision and soul sorrows he had in the "exceeding high mountain," knowing that He ever lives to remember his sufferings, that he may be touched with a feeling of thy infirmities. Alas, alas, how little use do we make of His glorious Person and of his intimate knowledge of our sufferings day by day!

In previous lectures we have briefly glanced at those deeper soul sufferings to which He was subjected, as our great sin bearer, when the sword of: Justice was bathed in heaven! upon these we cannot again enter here. My object having been answered, if by the Holy Comforter's teaching the minds of the Lord's little-faiths are led to look after their own personal fellowship with the glorious Man of sufferings in ALL those varied trials and exercises through which according to covenant purpose they are called daily to travel. Because, I know, as they can trace the foot-prints of the good Shepherd, as having gone before them through these intricate paths. they will often be led to hold communion with Him, even in sorrow. Then, remembering that all meets upon you now, because you belong to Christ; the tendency of it is to lift you above your sorrows, and as faith apprehends the truth of the matter, to cause you to "rejoice that you are accounted worthy to suffer for his "Such honour have all his saints."

Volumes may be written upon the soul sorrow which our glorious "Man of sorrows" passed-through in the solemn gardens of Geth-But upon this we purpose, if the Lord will, to dwell at some future time as a distinct subject, and also upon those deeps of soul suffering which belong to Calvary arising from the hidings of the Father's face! In the mean time, what fulness of true spiritual iov arises from the contemplation of the extent of Christ's sufferings. They were equal to the debt of the church, be that debt what it may! Who shall measure or calculate the mighty sum! If the burden of one sin crushes thy new heart, my brother, what must that ponderous load have been which arose from the concentration of the memorable sins of a number which no man can number? Gaze, my brother, on the tremendous scene! think of the extent of that suffering, "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!" what, gaze without a tear? yes, say you, that is my mystery!

"I can read each moving line,
And nothing melt this heart of mine\"

How abundantly blessed then is the precious truth in its fulness. Here is wonderful love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us! not because we melt and are dissolved in gratitude, but because He will form a people for himself who shall show forth his praise, and we know that while for a moment or two he gives us a few droppings of felt communion with Him in his sufferings, then do we wonder how it is we could be so hard and unfeeling. And then again, we wonder why he does not not keep us always in such a soft and grateful frame. But these sweet moments are dropped down to us as momentary foretastes of what eternally awaits us when we have done with our part of the suffering; therefore, the Lord help thee to see, my brother, that thy very hardness forms part of thy portion of suffering, and that it is right thou shouldest thus suffer, since it is here thou art having thy time fellowship with Him in sorrows, that thou mayest abundantly prize that which remaineth, namely, an eternal weight of communion with Him IN HIS GLORY.

It is as we sit down here we can meditate upon, in some small degree, and rejoice in the INFINITE VALUE of Christ's sorrows. They put all the sins of every redeemed child of God eternally away, so that when they are sought for there shall be none! do you live in the enjoyment of this unbounded blessedness, my brother? The Father then beholds the whole family in the Person of Christ, without spot! Jehovah loves them, blesses them, joys over them! and all this the fruit and manifesting forth the value of Christ's sorrows. Oh glorious "Man of Sorrows!"

"All thy wounds and bruises are, To my soul exceeding fair!"

What then is the teaching of His sorrows? It will be found in this, my troubled brother, as Paul tells us "consider Him that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds," because ye have daily fellowship with Him in his sufferings. We suffer now to make us suitable companions for Him. He suffered then to become a suitable companion for us, and by faith we come to the blessed conclusion that He drank our eternal cup of sorrow until it was quite empty, that He might present to us His infinite cup of joy eternally full!

His peace be with you. Amen.

IMMANUEL'S PROMISE TO HIS BRIDE.

(No. 1.)

" Certainly I will be with thee!" Exod. iii. 12.

No sooner does a child of God come, by the blessed ministry of the Spirit, to a discovery of the greatness of salvation, than he finds a continual proneness to look at himself in all his deformity, and exclaim with Moses, "Who am I," that I should be a partaker of such immortal glories as those which I now see to be treasured up for God's holy family in the Person of Christ? Nor need we wonder that it should be so. Indeed, I confess, the more I am led into the wonderful subject, connected as these leadings are, with equally deep discoveries of my own more than depravity, for it is a total death in self, after my earthy Adam nature, to all that is holy or spiritual, the more I am constrained to stop and ask the question, "Is it not a mistake?" "If it be so, why am I thus?" If Christ be formed in me the hope of glory"—if grace reigns in my heart through righteousness, unto eternal life—and all is the free sovereign gift of God to me, without a single reason in myself to induce the gift, and I have the witness of the Spirit in my soul that I am passed from death, or out of death, into eternal life—how is it I cannot carry myself more above self, sin, Satan, the world, and the working of infidelity and unbelief? It is so great a salvation so high a dignity conferred upon those who possess it—to have been selected, chosen out of the mass of mankind-vessels to honour! fit for the use and glory of Him who upholds ALL THINGS by the word of his power! not only to bow before Him in eternal adoration, but to be JOINT-HEIRS with Him, who is himself HEIR OF ALL It is so great a grace, so glorious a gift, so high a calling. a salvation from a condition so intensely wretched, to a blessedness so unutterably glorious, that every child of God who knows what it is to go in, by precious faith, and "sit before the Lord" in the Person of Jesus, in sweet contemplation thereof, must expect to find the effect to be what it was in the case of David, under the revelations of Jehovah's loving-kindness, tender mercy, and aboundings of grace towards him. And, moreover, the same conclusion must THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 42.

be drawn, and then will follow the same precious plea. The effect of the greatness of the discovery of Jehovah's purpose was astonish-"And he said, who am I, O Lord God and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" And this was vet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; [Blessed as are our Ebenezers, yet what are they compared with the royal robe and the royal crown which await us at the end of the valley?] but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come! And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. How sweetly does this express the upgoings of the heart of a living child of God, under the confirming and sealing testimonies of the Holy Comforter! With the heart dissolved into gratitude, "What can David say more?" Ah, but David is such a hell-deserving sinner! True! black as the tents of Kedar! But "thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant!" It can be for nothing he is or has in himself. No. What then is the conclusion? Oh how precious are these things in their power and unction, binding up the broken-hearted! Why hast thou bestowed so great a grace upon so vile a sinner, Lord? Mark the blessedness, my brother! "For thy WORD'S sake, and according to THINE OWN HEART, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them." Who is the Word, but our most glorious Christ? And why have we such great things given to us in Him? but because of the everlasting love our Covenant God and Father ever had towards us in Him. This is the deep profound which David calls "THINE OWN HEART," from whence all our blessings flow. then the Holy Comforter takes up his abode in the heart to make the sinner "know them!" Then follows the plea. My brother, does it not bring to thy mind many such seasons, when in true contrition of spirit, thou has sat down under his shadow with great delight, and had a few heavenly moments of sweet communion and fellowship with the Holy Three who bear record in heaven? and have not such seasons ever terminated by little-faith putting in her plea? and has the Lord ever denied thee yet? Never. "And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and DO AS THOU HAST SAID!"

Little-faith always wants something to grasp. Moses asked the Lord for something to carry in the hand of faith. Dear Mr. Hart, in the sweet account he gives of his experience of the Lord's revelation of Christ and salvation in his heart, tells us that when he had

received his pardon, full and free, he was constrained to put a question, "But for the future, Lord?"—I feel my mind led to insert the whole passage, it is such a practical comment on the words of both Moses and David.

"While I was yet a great way off,
He ran, and on my neck he fell;
My short distress he judg'd enengh;
And snatch'd me from the brink of hell

What an amazing change was here;
I look'd for hell, he brought me heaven:
"Cheer up," said he; "dismiss thy fear;
Cheer up; thy sins are all forgiven."

I would object; but faster much
He answer'd, 'Peace,' 'What me ?' 'Yes, thee!'
"Bat my enormous crimes are such;"
"I give thee pardon, full and free!"

"But for the future, Lord:"—"I AM
THY GREAT SALVATION! perfect! whole!
Behold thy bad works shall not damn,
Nor can thy good works save thy soul.

** Renounce them both, myself alone
Will for thee work, and in thee, too.
HENCEFORTH I MAKE THY CAUSE MY OWN,
AND UNDERTAKE TO BRING THEE THROUGH."

It is by the realization in experience of the entire completeness of our great salvation in the Person of Christ, that we are brought to enter into the fulness of David's testimony in that song of praise recorded in 2 Samuel vii., and also to understand the full glory of the precious promise, "Certainly I will be with thee."

Three questions arise out of this divine declaration, the answers to which are full of consolation to a tempest-tossed child of God. First, How? Secondly, When? Thirdly, For what purpose?

is the Lord with his people.

How? Here stands the unalterable blessedness of every member of the mystical body of Christ; and I add, my brother, and I pray the Holy Comforter, on your behalf, that he condescend to open the glory of this subject to your renewed mind yet more and more fully—that until we grow up into an experimental familiarity with this eternal mercy, we shall be ever making mistakes, and drawing envoneous conclusions from matters which never have, can, or shall, be taken into the account, in the way in which we too often look at them.

It is in Living Union that Jehovah-Father, Son, and Spirit, is ever WITH his people; "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one!" Would you know a little of the infinite value of this, my brother? Look for a moment at the other side of the question—" Our God is a consuming fire." He is either with us in an union which nothing can sever or dissolve; or he is to us, and will be so eternally, a fire full of "indignation and wrath. tribulation and anguish!" (Rom. ii. 8.) There are no half or intermediate conditions, whatever men's fleshly systems may teach. How solemn on the one hand the question ! - Am I in union with Christ? How blessed the conclusion on the other—" We know that the Son of God is come, [not only into the world, but into our hearts, by the divine power and operation of the Holy Ghost] and hath given us AN UNDERSTANDING, that we may know Him that is true; and we are IN HIM that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.) Looking at these most glorious truths in all their solemn import and value, well may we exclaim with the Apostle, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have [or margin, hold fast] grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 28.)

How truly blessed does the subject become, if in answering the question, How is Jehovah with his people? we take up our position by the side of the manger of Bethlehem, ever remembering to take into our estimate of the wonderful circumstances we behold, that all which is being unfolded there, is but the fulfilment of the eternal covenant purpose and good will of Jehovah, purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began; because in that covenant Jesus the eternal Head ever had been looked upon as one with his body the Church. Thus standing within the family circle of this precious union, whatever transpires to fill us with wonder, will also elevate our hearts in adoration and praise, for at every opening of that most mysterious scene, with faith in exercise, we shall listen to the echo of the same divine declaration, "Certainly I will be with thee!"

What is the name of that holy Babe? It contains in it the substance of all that is most blessed! The Lord engrave it upon thy troubled heart, my brother, with his own sweet translation of the same, and thou shalt find it to thee, even when the enemy cometh in like a flood, as the ointment poured forth! It is Immanuel, God WITH us!

Here we find the blessed union in its grand development, no conger in covenant purpose alone, but in openly-avowed and actuallyaccomplished fact; He, the mighty God of Jacob, having passed by in his descent into his lowly relationship, the nature of angels, has taken upon himself the form of a servant, the fashion of a man, the seed of Abraham, being made of a woman! But why all this? Because his body, his Bride, could be found only in this low place. He was MADE UNDER THE LAW. But why? because his beloved ones, his joy and crown, could be found only in this low place. Therefore, that he might be WITH his bride, He, too, must be made under the law, that he might redeem them, that he loved so well. who were under the law. Yea, more; as we travel onward through all the dark scenes of the history of our glorious Man of Sorrows. at every new opening up of the glory and mystery of his Person. the same precious promise strikes, in soft melody, its New Testament chimes upon our ever-needy hearts, " Certainly I will be with thee!" By nature we were rebels against God; "Enemies to God by wicked works." He steps into the gap; gives us his peace; becomes himself our peace! and as such, he is henceforth with us. We lay under the curse; He saw the condition of his little Benjamin, cast out in his blood into the open field, to the loathing of his person. He saw;—and instantly stepping down into the same low place, he said, " Certainly I will be with thee;" and thus "Redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us!" And not only so, but whatever we were as sinners, this blessed union, and the fulfilment of the promise based thereon, caused our most glorious Christ, still as our faithful God, to step again into our condition, that as the Head of his body, he might not only be with his members, but bring them up out of their deformed and revolting state of ugliness, and present them unto himself, transformed into his own glorious image in all its beauty! Therefore. He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him! How blessed is it thus to contemplate our adorable Jesus taking upon himself all our debts; bearing our griefs, and carrying our sorrows, saying, at every step, "But look, poor sinner, I am one with thee! Whatever thou art, I must come and be that for thee; whatever fires thou passest through, or whatever stripes thou art sentenced to endure, by virtue of our oneness, and my eternal bond, 'Certainly I will be with thee! Yea, and so with thee, that I will be FOR thee; I will stand in thy stead! Thy merited rebukes shall break

my heart, that I may be with thee to bind up thine. The two-edged sword of justice shall enter into my soul, that the pointless sword of mercy may be eternally thy portion." How astonishing are these answers to the question, How is God with his people? But these are but the beginning of the eternal mercy. These are but the openings in manifestation of the fulness of that great mys-

tery, "God was manifest in the flesh."

Listen again to the voice of the Beloved! "Behold me! Behold me! Where art thou looking, poor sinner? Did I not say unto thee, 'Certainly I will be with thee!' What art thou trembling about? Wrath to come? There is none for thee. The pains of hell? There are none for thee. The fear of death? is no death for thee. 'Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.' I am Immanuel still! God in thine own very nature still! And all this, that I may be with thee! Dost thou remember Gethsemane? How was I with thee there? Was it not as one who served in thy stead? Where now is thy wrath to come? Count, if thy swelling grief will suffer thee, the purple drops in that doleful garden; and call to mind those bitter cries, 'Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water-spouts—as with all their rage they burst upon the top of thine eternal rock, and spent the last drop of their foaming fury there.—ALL thy waves and thy billows are GONE OVER ME! Poor sinner! where now are those waves and billows of a Father's wrath? To come? ah no! All have gone over me! eternal sunshine of love and mercy sits upon thy Father's brow, and Justice now holds his sword to defend thine everlasting liberty! But look again, poor sinner. I said it! Have I failed thee yet? 'Certainly I will be with thee!' Put forth once more thy little hand of faith. Why dost thou tremble? That longing wish to lay hold !—that groaning that cannot be uttered !—is my witness in thy heart, 'That all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'"

"I cannot love thee more—

1 will not love thee less.

In my sight fair; cleansed by my word;

A Bride adorned for her Lord!"

"Talk not about uncomeliness; lift up thy shamed face, and gaze upon thy Friend! Has He sufficient beauty to satisfy thy earnest longing after purity, perfection, holiness, and truth. Come near to me, my purchased one! Behold and fear not! 'I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I

am alive for evermore. Amen! and have the keys of hell and of death!' I am still thine own brother. Thou art poor little Benjamin, a captive weeper, terrified by thy condition. But lift up thy dejected eyes to me! See who it is that has led thee captive. I have allured and made all the world a wilderness to thee! I have sent after thee, and shown thee the stolen cup in the sack's mouth. I have made thee feel that thou art indeed a condemned criminal. held fast by hands stronger than thine own! But I have done all this to let the see how I fulfil my promise—how I am with thee. Again look up, my fearful brother; for, although exalted so high that all things are given unto me, it is for thy sake I live. It is to bless thee I am what I am! Listen, dear Benjamin, I brought thee back, that I might show kindness to thee. Thou wouldest have fled from me, but I promised, certainly to be with thee; and now it is that I may speak upon thine heart, that I have put thee into bondage, and that my own hands may take away the chain. Thou art trembling at the thought of the dungeon. But see, my longed-for brother, it is Joseph's shoulder that bears the key. And this is how I have fulfilled my promise. I was sent before thee to keep thee alive. I have been imprisoned for thee; my way lay through the dungeon; although I sinned not, the pains of hell gat hold upon me. But now I eternally carry the keys."

"Poor sinner! Where is thy hell? Look to Calvary! In the flowing of that precious blood, behold the flames of thy hell extinguished for ever! What shall kindle it again? What! thine own bad deeds? Nay, it cannot be; for past, and present, and to come, all the debt of the whole of my body met upon me on that most fearful morning. But mine own arm brought me salvation then, mighty as was the debt; yet my blood, because I am Immanuel, God with thy nature, paid all the mighty score! I met thine enemy, thy last and saddest enemy; thy sins became his sting. I bowed my head that he might vent his venom there. He struck! I seized his sting! I hurled it back into eternal forgetfulness! I cried out, It is finished! Entered the strong-hold of the fearful monster! Lay down and slept a Sabbath's rest upon his couch! Then rose triumphant! unlocked the gate of death. and took away the key! Henceforth both hell and death are mine. Behold me then, poor sinner. No wrath to come-no hell to torment-no death to scare thee now remains. All is swallowed

up in victory!

"Ah yes, I know thy fears; thy future too is safe. My righteousness is thine. It is in that alone thou art beheld at all times. as thou drawest near in supplications to a throne of grace. Thy sins being cast behind thy Father's back, shall never more be found. Thou canst not come BEFORE him clothed in those filthy rags; but as I, in thine own nature, now present as thy Priest upon the throne, present thee in myself, All fair! Thou dost at all times come up in thy most feeble whispers before the mercy-seat. Then fear not! Thus I am with thee. I am thine elder brother! I am thy loving Joseph! I, thine almighty Friend, have said it, and I cannot deny myself. 'Certainly I will be with thee.'

"Yes, I am with thee as thy life. Thine everlasting light, thy God, and thy glory. Then what if in self thou feelest dark, and cold, and dead. Listen to my words, and these must prove true, for certainly, as thy life, thy light, thy love, I will be with thee. Because I live thou shalt live also.' 'I am alive for evermore.'

Then for evermore shalt thou live too!"

Yes, thou needest grace. But once more, dear Benjamin, behold thy brother "exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to his Benjamins, and forgiveness of sins;" and listen to the neverchanging testimony of the Holy Comforter, It hath pleased the Father that in thy Jesus should ALL FULNESS dwell. "This is thy blessedness, poor sinner! Thou art brought to know that in thy flesh dwells no good thing; that it may delight thee to know that this is how I am with thee at all times; containing in myself. according to the good pleasure of thy Father, all the goodness He will ever look for in thee. And I tell thee, for thy comfort and thy joy, that I will never forsake thee. But whenever the Father looks upon thee, 'Certainly I will be with thee;' covering thee with myself as with a robe, so that the testimony at all times shall 'The king's daughter is be when Jehovah himself searches thee. all glorious within, her raiment is of wrought gold."

Now, my brother, what say you to the answer to the question, How is Jehovah with his people? Is it not thus, in the Person of his well-beloved Son, whom He calls the Man his Fellow, and yet Him whom we are privileged to call our own Brother born to be with us in all things, and suffer for and with us in our adversity; who, while He is thus one with us in eternal union, is one with us also in nature, who is our eternal life, our God, and our glory?

Well may Paul say, "If God be thus for us, who shall be against us."

We have two other points to notice, namely, when, and for what purpose, does the promise find its fulfilment? "Certainly I will be with thee." While we pass over to next lecture. His peace be with you. Amen.

IMMANUEL'S PROMISE TO HIS BRIDE.

(No. 2.)

" Certainly I will be with thee!"—Exodus iii. 12.

FAITH is a most precious grace of the Spirit. But there are deeps which lie under, and steps which rise above faith. It is very common to hear persons talk of faith as though it were some act of the creature's by which a Christian is united to Christ: and thus faith becomes a work; salvation is made to depend upon this work. and therefore salvation can no more be said to be all of grace, or all a free gift; since—if this were true—it is an inheritance obtained by conquest rather than by heirship, or right of succession. True, "Faith is an overcoming power." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;" and "Without faith it is impossible to please God." But whence have we this faith? Is it an inherent power at the command of every man? Is it that by which one who is now in a state of separation from Christ can put forth his hand-that is, his faith, and lay hold upon Him, and so be "joined to the Lord and one Spirit?" What says the Truth? "Without me," or separate from me, "ye can do nothing." It follows then (and this vital point we pray the Holy Comforter to make daily more and more clear to all the dear family of God) that before faith must be union! That Faith is a blessed fruit of the Spirit none will deny; but to bring forth fruit a branch must be a living branch; and before fruit can be brought forth that branch must have GROWN OUT OF THE ROOT! How simple is the truth! The fruit does not unite the branch to the vine, but proves that it is united. So faith does not unite to Christ, but is a sweet spiritual fruit, which plainly tells the beholder that such an one is " joined to the Lord and-literally-one Breath!"

"Certainly I will be with thee;" as an absolute promise is secure to all the seed royal of King Jesus down to the end of time. And now that we come to answer the question, When? or, to what time does this refer? we shall see the blessedness of union.

My brother, have you been brought to a knowledge of your need of Jesus? Do you by daily feeling experience know that you are worse than nothing and vanity in yourself? Do the thorns and [The Gospel Cottage Lectures, No. 43.

the briars by many a keenly-smarting sting, prove to you moment by moment that in you, that is in your flesh, dwelleth NO GOOD THING? How great is the mercy! What! say you; that I am such a vile person as I am! No, my brother, but that you feel That you are not an unfeeling, dead, professional branch, lying in your own sin, pride, self-conceit, false piety, and selfrighteousness, cast out as a branch to rot in your own corruption. Deeply humiliating as are the sensatious, and bitter as are the pangs of soul which a living child of God suffers by reason of the law of sin in the members, yet, I say it, my brother, in the fear of God. which is so "clean" that it is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death; I would rather feel myself to be the vilest sinner out of hell, with a little-faith's drowning grip upon the Lamb of God, than I would be the most starched and sanctimonious pattern of freezing piety that ever held in constraint and bondage a band of young ladies at a Bible class, or filled a professor's chair; while engraven on his brow, are clearly visible, the "Thank God I am not as other men." One thing we shall ever find; it is the poor broken-hearted penitent weeping at the feet of Jesus who makes. and delights to make, "Christ all and in all;" while Simon may. it is true, invite him to his house and board, but it is because he would fain claim him as the friend of Pharisees; since he manifests his enmity against Him the moment he discovers that he has gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner.

Well, says one, twenty years ago I was in much trouble and came like Mary, but since then I have been going on smoothly, and do not now find it needful to go over the same ground again. believe God pardoned my sins, and therefore I take it for granted all is well. Ah, my friend, it is a solemn fact that in things spiritual we must often seek for a parallel in things natural. I will read to you a well-known example; "Experiments have been made upon human bodies, and those of other animals, which, by the application of galvanism, after death, have exhibited various muscular movements, such as lifting the eye-lids, moving the arms and legs, &c., but though motions usually produced by the will acting by the nerves upon the muscles have thus been generated by a species of the electric fluid, yet the subjects of the experiment. when the action was intermitted, CONTINUED STILL WITHOUT LIFE." How many a sick chamber, how many a case of sudden calamity or bereavement, how many a-most significantly named-REVIVAL, has witnessed such a scene, spiritually? The excitement ceases, dead

^{*} Kirby's Bridgewater Treatise, Introduc. vol. 1, p. 16.

peace ensues, and the remembrance of the sensations produced are cherished with pleasing care; as of a dreadful operation passed through once and for ever, and an altar erected upon the spot inscribed with the words, "Sacred to the memory of MY CONVERSION!"

I think I hear some person say, "Oh, sir, do not be so unkind;

you do not know how many good people you may wound."

I speak of those who are religious, but who do not know any thing of the DAILY need of coming like Mary, and weeping at the feet of Jesus. Who do not know the bitterness of the plague of their own hearts, an unceasing conflict waged in their own breasts against Satan, self, sin, and the world. And to such I will read another lesson.

"PHARISAIC ZEAL, and ANTINOMIAN SECURITY, are the two engines of Satan, with which he grinds the church in all ages, as betwixt the upper and nether mill-stone. The space between them is much narrower and harder to find than most men imagine. It is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen; and none can show it us but the Holy Ghost. Here let no one trust the directions of his own heart, or of any other man; lest by being warned to shun the one, he be dashed against the other. The distinction is two fine for man to discern, therefore let the Christian ask direction of his God. These two hideous monsters continually worry and perplex my soul: nor is the former, though appearing in a holier shape, one whit less, but if possible, more odious to me than the latter."

Cheer up, my exercised "brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

"'Tis to hear the Holy Spirit
Prompting as to secret prayer;
To-rejoice in Jesu's merit,
Yet continued sorrow bear.

To receive a full remission
Of our sins for ever more;
Yet to sigh with sore contrition,
Begging mercy every hour.

To be steadfast in believing;
Yet to tremble, fear, and quake;
Ev'ry moment be receiving
Strength, and yet be always weak."

"Certainly I will be with thee." And this experience is the abiding evidence that He is fulfilling his precious promise.

^{*} Mr. Hart's Experience in his book of Hymns.

But come we now to the source and certainty of this blessedness. We have seen now He is with us, as our Root, our Life, our All. in oneness of nature and spiritual being. But when did this commence? Oh deep profound! "How precious are thy thoughts unto me. O God! how great is the sum of them!" "Sanctified by God the Father! preserved in Christ Jesus! and called!" Here we may venture to change the tense, and listen to the glorious promise as a soul-establishing declaration of the covenant mercy of our God to us in Christ! Because we are witnesses of a momentary succession of living spiritual needs, such as the feeling of hunger after the bread of life, panting after the water of life, earnest longing after the light of life, holy upgoings after the Spirit of life, and babe-like desires after the milk, love, comfort, and sweet consolation of the Word of Life. We know that we are passed over out of death into eternal life, and shall never come into condemnation. But we know—as the Holy Comforter opens our understandings to perceive the source of all this—that it arises to us because our names were eternally inscribed in the Lamb's book of life, and therefore, as we gaze by faith into the eternal council of peace, and wonder and adore while we contemplate the grand and glorious settlements which were signed and sealed, ordered in all things and made as secure as Almighty Wisdom, love, and power combined could render them there, that the precious truth unfolds in all its mysterious fulness of covenant grace and mercy, and faith bends down its ear and listens to the endearing testimony of the Holy Bridegroom, as he whispers to his bride, "Certainly I was with thee there!" My brother! what are all time pedigrees compared with Talk of noble lines of ancestors! Behold an origin and a this? destiny! Infinite in duration, splendour, and glory! Yes, and a crown, and a robe, and a palm branch of victory, an inheritance all fair and all durable; and, to crown the whole, a seat upon the throne. and an abiding place in the eternal heart's-love of the mighty Creator of heaven and of earth! But that which brings it all home, and puts it into the trembling hand of the little babe in Christ, is a sweetly-conformed knowledge of the sure and golden tokens on which are engraved the all-important words, "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Forgive me for trespassing on you by mentioning the tokens again—they are,

"Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,
"Tis Jesus inspires! which bid you still seek!
His Spirit will cherish, THE LIFE HE FIRST GAVE
YOU NEVER CAN PERISH, WRILE JESUS CAN SAVE!"

The precious word of God furnishes us with a map of the whole of the journey of God's chosen people through time. It is not without comfort and instruction that we again stand by faith in the great council chamber in eternity past, and take another view of our glorious Christ, after all was completed in covenant engagement between the mighty Three; as He sat down, the Head of his body; the Husband of His bride; the Mediator, set up from everlasting: He who then in covenant was made unto His peculiar people "Wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." According to that memorable revelation of the mind of Christ given to us by the Holy Testifier of Jesus in the 8th of Proverbs. "I Wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions." Here we find our most glorious Christ, the Wisdom of His body the Church, dwelling with delight on the great and eternal plan of salvation. Turning over page after page in the wonderful history (we speak after the manner of men, for all to Him was one eternal now!) and rejoicing over His Bride as he beheld her going on up the path of life, saying as he watched her progress through fire and flood, "a weakling more than strong," "Certainly I will be with thee."

Thus, taking a prospective survey of all the time developments of those "Witty inventions," or deep discretions, into which, as they are now unfolding, the angels desire to pry, our great Redeemer, our eternal Wisdom dwelling with all things NAKED and open to his view—as the word rendered prudence may be construed—reached forward, came to, or made present to himself—as the word translated find out, when applied to the Omniscient, signifies—all those wonderful circumstances into which his Bride was to be brought in time. Yes, and in the midst of all that tremendous responsibility which he well knew devolved upon himself, yet He testifies, that, in the full preception of the part He had engaged to perform in the awful tragedy, yet He was "rejoicing ALWAYS;" "Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

But why do we go over these things? Why take such delight in dwelling upon these mysterious matters, which after all we may think or say about them, are so profoundly deep, that our most expansive views, when compared with the infinite reality, fade like a glowworm in the sun, or become as nothing like a drop lost in the ocean? Look at the propriety and advantages of such contemplations in two points of view, and if you have the witness of the Spirit

in your heart that "all are yours," you will delight with me to dive deeply in these glorious researches.

Why, as our beloved Prince of Wales grows up into manhood, will he not only delight to-go over the extent and riches of his empire, but also take especial pleasure in looking carefully into the nature of our constitution, in the wisdom of which he will trace the stability of his future throne? The richer the prize becomes in his estimation, the greater must be his anxiety to ascertain, beyond a doubt, the ultimate security of his interest in it. But what are empires and thrones which belong to this moment, time, which are all passing away, compared to that eternal inheritance which our adorable Jesus has purchased for his Bride? having also raised her up in himself to a royal dignity fully suitable for the possession thereof. Since "He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood!" Oh glorious cleansing! "and made us Kings and priests unto God and his Father! To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Religious persons, whose views of such things rise no higher than the natural mind of man can carry them, cannot like these things, because they see in them a state of spiritual enjoyment they are strangers to. A very beautiful system of morals—because it is founded on the word of God—is the summit of their aspirations, and a melancholy inducing-awe and dread of God is the essence of all they understand by communion with him. But, it must be altogether otherwise with a truly spiritually living child of God. Two things have happened to him which have now changed the whole current of his thoughts, and present an entirely new set of objects for his pursuit: indeed by these two things seen by living faith his conversion is complete; for now, like Paul, after he was TURNED BOUND, all else is behind him, and his one prevailing desire is to forget them, that he may with the more simplicity have his mind and affections swallowed up in Christ. I will read to you, my brother, the dear Apostle's words in which he expresses this sweet state of experience. I read it a little different to our version, because I think it opens more clearly the Spirit's meaning in the testimony; but I read chiefly after the translation of one of our most learned critics. "Not as if I had already attained, or were already perfected; but I follow after, if indeed I may lay hold of that, for which also I have been laid hold of by Christ. Brethren, I do not reckon myself to have laid hold [in the FULL REALIZA-270N IN EXPERIENCE of more than this. One thing [but this in

^{*} Griesbach.

its blessedness I hold fast through the grace given unto me, day by day] forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," (Philip. iii. 12, &c.) Now what were the two things which produced all this in the apostle? By faith he had seen the "King in his beauty, and beheld the land that is very far off." A glimpse of the eternal inheritance, in all its Royal grandeur, had caused the apostle to delight himself in looking into the constitution by which this was made secure to him in the councils of peace, and the sight of the beauty of his King had so ravished his heart, that thenceforth the Person of Christ, and all connected with the assurances of his tender regard towards his bride, became the sole theme of his heart.

Look then, my brother, at the motion which gives such earnestness and delight to a lover of Jesus to go deeply into all the precious words and ways of Him "who is the chiefest among ten thonsand, and the altogether levely." It is not curious speculation, such as that which actuates the man of science in his deep divings intoprofound things. No. But it is simple love! deep, all-absorbing love! Yes, such a love, which will cause all else to love its interest. A love ever young and active, that shall yield much living fruits of spiritual delight in many a precious cluster on the branch. even in old age. High above all feelings of duty or selfishness. the love of Christ leads up and far away, all the affections of the heart: so that, although I know they would be called poor old foolish enthusiasts by all who are not in the divine secret, yet, many are the aged ones, with whom I love to linger, whose faculties in all other respects have become blunted, but who maintain a freshness and sparkling of delight, and a sweet heart-dissolving glow of affection, which is daily waxing brighter and more divinely radient. as their tottering footsteps carry them the nearer to the tomb. Talk to these precious old pilgrims about any of the generally all-engrossing subjects of the day, they hardly seem to comprehend your meaning, or treat you as if you were talking about some wonderful thing that was likely to happen in the moon: but mention the name of Jesus! the living fire that lights up the otherwise dim eye tells of an interest in that glorious Person which has no rival in that poor old blighted heart. And I confess, this is one of those features in the knowledge of Christ, that makes it so trancendently precious to my soul, I cannot but glory in the thought, that grow as I may in the knowledge of Him even down to old age, yet he is new every morning! His Person, love, and glory, shine brighter and brighter

unto the perfect day; so that it is in regard to spiritual realities directly opposite to that which rules in things natural. In youth man by nature lives upon the future, in old age he lives upon the past. Not so the heaven-born heir of glory. His past things are as so many sad school-days, which as they drop off the thread of time, bring him nearer to the dawn of that golden day, which shall know of no sad morrow, and which shall crown all our sorrowful yesterdays with unutterable joy. Such do not know what is to sit down and mourn after days of hope and pleasure gone! Ah no. But their past in time, is all a blank to them; excepting those evergreen spots where they have mounted up for a few moments in sweet communion, on wings as eagles, and caught a glimpse of the goodly land, and have listened to the voice of the turtle in sweet melody concerning Zion's all-glorious King.

I say, such, having seen him, and heard his precious voice, and having been caused to feel in their own hearts that their love to Him is the effect of his love to them! When they meet any who are intimate with Him, what is their salutation? Is it not now as it was of old? "Saw ve Him whom my soul loveth?" Shall the most ardent love in nature outvie that which is divine? Nay. but if the answer be, yes, I saw him to-day. How simply does it follow, that questions should arise as to what He said, the sweetness of his words, the beauty of his person, the divine glory of his whole nature, grace, and fulness; and therefore it is with these motives we delight to go over the blessed covenant engagements which make our eternal inheritance secure on the one hand, that we may have the comforts of hope, and then to feast our hearts upon the preciousness of those divine delights which our most glorious Christ took in his beloved Bride, even before a single act was performed, by which he manifested the riches of his love to her. This is the sweet work of faith, and labour of love.

But I find I must break off until next lecture.

Cheer up, my travelling brother, it is a most blessed thing to be brought in the true spiritual experience of the matter to say—although the flesh dislikes the way we have to be brought to it—

There's no such thing as pleasure here, My Jesus is my all; As he doth shine or disappear, My pleasures rise or fall!

His adorable Person in sweet manifestation fill your hearts with joy and peace in believing. Amen.

IMMANUEL'S PROMISE TO HIS BRIDE.

(No. 3.)

" Certainly I will be with thee!" Exod. iii. 12.

It is all very well for persons who are at ease in a profession of religion in which there is no spiritual life, and therefore no spiritual light, to make manifest the hidden depths of evil which abound in the heart, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; to say, "Oh I do not trouble myself about the eternal covenant and purposes of God." But for a man who daily sees and feels what a volcano of evil is pent up in his bosom, and who sometimes is horrified by the rolling, and heaving, and tumult of the hell within him, which makes the very earth to quake, lest it should burst forth, so that he trembles before his God; it becomes of vital importance that he know the foundation on which his hopes rest. It may be easy for a ship-master in a dead calm to sit quietly, down and smile upon those who talk tremblingly about shipwrecks. let the poor creature come into a tempest like that which Paul passed through; with everything dark both within and without; floods dashing over him every moment, breakers ahead, and the very ship itself creaking at every joint; ask him then, when he is brought into that most trying of all spots-and yet the most blessed—at his wit's END! if he can sit down and fold his arms in perfect peace? No; impossible! at least, without certain things done and known first. Now, whatever men may say, it is just thus with every living child of God. The devil, their own carnal hearts, the cares of this life, and their own proneness to unbelief, work the Lord's living ones constant tribulation. Yea, it is through MUCH tribulation of this kind we must enter the kingdom. And this wholly arises to us because we are the subjects of spiritual life; and therefore every moment in determined conflict, though we may die at our post, fighting with holy indignation against vile self, in every shape, the power of sin, and the infernal wiles and malicious attacks of that old serpent the devil. It must be so, for if in Jesus Christ eternal peace has been proclaimed between myself as a new creature and the court of heaven, the more I know of the glory [THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 44.

of this peace, the more shall I taste of the bitterness of this war-Nevertheless, it is out of these bitters come my choicest moments of divine feeding by faith, upon dying love! cleansing blood! and the sweet knowledge of the ever present companionship of Jesus my great salvation! Yes, certainly He is with me in every state and at every time! Moreover, in our choicest moments we feel, rough though it be, it is a right way to bring us to a city of habitation. Israel of old were kept in the wilderness for two purposes. First, that they might be humbled and know what was in their hearts—that they might be brought to nothing in self; and secondly, that they might learn the preciousness of living by faith. not by enjoyment; that they might know that man doth not live by bread alone, or by feeding alone, enjoyment alone, but by every procedure from the mouth of Jehovah; that is, every opening circumstance of that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. (Deut. viii. 2, 3; where observe "word" is in italics.) Storms and tempests, conflicts and darkness, are as much in the covenant as those sweet moments of spiritual sunshine, when we have the comforting presence in divine manifestation of the Son of God: what then follows? A wise ship-master will never sit down contented until he has carefully taken his soundings, found abundant sea room, and a stable anchorage, in which he knows the anchor will hold fast, come what may. Peter was once going into such a storm as he had never known at sea. Covenant mercy was watching over him, saying, "Certainly I will be with thee." Jesus showed Peter his anchorage before the storm came. "I have prayed for thee! that thy FAITH fail not;" all else must suffer loss; but faith entered within the vail and held fast. Fear not. my brother; He is Jesus Christ, the same to-day he was then. and there is not a moment, or a footstep in thy weary path, but He still prays for thee.

There is a maxim concerning things natural, which holds good in things spiritual; namely, "Things that are first in order of nature, are last in order of knowledge." The philosopher is not called a fanatic, although he always acts upon this principle. But woe be to his reputation if he bring his maxim to bear upon things of eternal substance, and trace all causes up to that one centre of blessedness—the eternal love of God our Father to his chosen and adopted children in the Person of Christ. However, it shall not be a question of mere choice with God's people. They shall be emptied from vessel to vessel in such a way, that at last they are driven to take refuge in this only stable hope, an anchorage within

the vail both sure and steadfast. But let them become once rooted and grounded here, the power of it is so real, that they are constrained to say with David, "This is all my salvation and all my desire;" because they here find "Christ all and in all!"

Coming thus to our subject again, since our adorable Mediator found his delights, when in the bosom of the Father, before all time, going over all the covenant circumstances which should attend his beloved Bride in time. How blessed is it to know that as He traced her devious pathway, first in her fall in Adam, her head in nature, and then in her state of death in sin, in her nature state, as born into this world, even then beholding her as his future Queen, he loved her still, and said, while He gazed upon her, " Certainly I will be with thee!" " Preserved in Jesus Christ." My brother, do you know anything about hair-breadth escapes from the entanglements of sin, the wiles of the devil, the power of the flesh, and the stubbornness of your unconquered will? Could all the wonderful dealings of our precious Christ towards us. in guiding, preventing, and overruling our wilful natures, while we were in a state of spiritual death, be presented to our view, we should discover even there, marked in strong and precious lines, the flowing of his never-varying love. It often fills my heart with gratitude, my mind with wonder, my tongue with praise, when I look back and trace the astonishing kindness extended towards me. How many a precipice! "My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped!" Almost? say you; I was quite gone, as low as I could go. Stay, my brother; in one sense you went as low as you could go; but why? He was with you! I should have plunged into hell again and again. But, "Certainly I will be with thee," plucked me from the jaw of the lion, Just in time. I knew not who did it, nor did I care. No, it is impossible for one of God's adopted children to sink out of the presence and protection of Him who is bound by covenant oath to fulfil his Father's will; "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day," (John vi. 39.)

"Determined to save, he watched o'er my path. When, Satan's blind slave, I sported with death!"

Here I must drop one observation for the encouragement of some of the Lord's exercised people, who travail in sorrow on account of the manifest spiritual death of some that are very near and dear to them. What a sweet consolation may be drawn, under the Holy

Comforter's anointings, from the knowledge of the ever-present watchful care of Jesus over his own sheep, even in their death in trespasses and sins. We feel that nothing we can do or say has a feather's weight of effect upon them. We may as well try to stay a torrent with a straw. But is there an earnest spirit of grace and supplication going forth continually on behalf of such? The Lord help thee, my dear troubled companion, to listen to the voice of this spirit of prayer to thyself. What says it? "Certainly I will be with——." There never was a spirit of prayer and supplication poured into the heart of a child of God, but that spirit was the harbinger of the fulfilment in God's time of the thing sought after. The Lord lead some troubled-spirited Hannah to fix upon the testimony, and she shall go away—long before the promise is fulfilled—with her countenance no more sad! There will then be melody in the dear promise "Certainly I will be with thee."

Was He not as manifestly with Israel in Egypt, as He was when He had brought them into the promised land? Yes. Or how did it happen that there was not one feeble person among them? But then, it is so divinely establishing to the soul of the child of God, to trace all up to the covenant love of the glorious Bridegroom, in his mindfulness of his body the Church. It then follows, that He not only delighted to view her even in this low condition. because He knew the certainty of the issue of all in His own glory. and her eternal exaltation and joy; but He then found his delights with the sons of men, in tracing over the wonderful provision that was made in Himself, for the purpose of bringing her up out of Egypt, and placing her, by faith, in the promised land. He saw her in all her bondage under the power of the devil and his taskmasters, and He said, "Certainly I will be with thee." He saw her led forth from under the dominion of the strong man armed, not knowing whither she was going, or what would be the issue, but compelled to go out into a new state of life—a new being, under a new master! He repeated his promise here, "Certainly I will be with thee." He saw her pursued by the fierce enemy, who now rose in his malice, determined to bring her back! He saw her stand trembling in helpless distress, not knowing what to do, an expected prey to death and But He smiled, and whispered, "CERTAINLY I will be with thee!" Oh my brother, could we hear the divine emphasis with which the dear Captain of our salvation pronounces His CERTAINLY, unbelief would hide his impudent face, and we should triamph in the God of our salvation. He saw her travelling through the midst of the sea, by a path she had not known. He saw the enemy still pursuing, rush headlong to his own defeat; yes, it is so now, the more fiercely the devil pursues a sinner saved by blood, the more does he hasten his own discomfiture, and the triumph of him he pants to swallow up in his raging floods. But Jesus saw all this, even before the time and place were made in which all was to be enacted to his glory, and said "Certainly I will be with thee." And did he keep his promise to Israel of old, and shall he fail his spiritual Israel now? No; there is the same purpose, the same love, the same Almighty power, the same infinite wisdom; while all the wonderful things of old were but accomplished to serve as so many types, to encourage and instruct us, upon whom the ends of the world are come. But again, the blessedness becomes glorious, as by faith we are enabled to take into our view of it, in some degree, the mighty whole; and so believe, and live in the sweet pursuasion, that what-EVER is now developing in the experience of the Lord's family however insignificant it may appear in itself—is the working out in reality, that which was gone over with delight, in covenant, by our now risen and exalted Mediator, before time began.

Thus, He beheld, and saw every individual member of his redeemed body, like Israel, come up out of the way himself had provided in the Red Sea: for ever having passed out of Egyptian death and bondage, never to return again under the dominion of Pharaoh -or the prince of this world. But now baptized unto Moses! He saw her thus, poor wandering Israel, wander into the wilderness of Sin! Did he forsake her? No; it is still, through all the discoveries which are made here, in which no rest is found, the same sweet promise, "Certainly I will be with thee." Thou shalt go on discovering daily more and more, how barren, and dry, and bitter a place, is the wilderness of Sin. How rebellious and stiffnecked thou art after all thy marvellous deliverances, thy vows, and thy songs, while thou art wanderers in the wilderness of Sin. But further still, He saw her turn, even under the thunders of Mount Sinai, and forsaking the God of her mercies, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and set up an idol and worship that! Oh Israel, how great the mercy! Thy God changeth not! Thou art changed indeed! Though Pharaoh could not reach thee, to carry thee back under his dominion, yet thou hast brought Egypt with thee, even through the Red Sea. Is it not so still, my brother? the moment a poor sinner comes fairly under the sound of the trumpet and the voice of words, to labour they go, and many a calf, and many a false refuge is the effect; for how prone are we all to say to the work of our own hands, ye must be our saviours! Ye must be our gods! Yet this alters nothing in Him. He saw all this, and saw that all was provided against, in the same precious engagement to which He is unchangingly faithful, "Certainly I will be with thee."

He saw her again, trembling in guilty dismay before the stern and wrathful Lawgiver. All hope seems now gone; destruction and misery alone appear to hang over her devoted head. No eye is seen to show pity, no hand is stretched forth to save. Why should there? She has disobeyed the Lord's simplest directions, and his holy law lies shattered as a testimony against her at the foot of the mount. The work of her own hands has been ground into powder, and her false hopes have recoiled upon herself, in a draught of gall and bitterness. Who so wretched, so overwhelmed with dismay, and dumb with consternation as she? Yet there is one eye pities, one heart still yearns over the fallen one, one tongue then can find a blessing to whisper, while all is pretending fierce displeasure, wrath, and cursing! It is his voice, who saw the end from the beginning, who said even here, "Certainly I will be with thee."

From this point, although still in the wilderness, yet a sweet change comes over the scene. Brought down as she was into the dust, guilty and undone, He still delighted to go on viewing the gradual opening of the spiritual vision to his Bride. Leaving the broken fragments of the law, she could not honour or fulfil, as a continual witness against her at that mountain, henceforth in the pattern of the heavenly things, she walks on by faith, viewing the unbroken covenant in its eternal depository on behalf of spiritual Israel; at all times the same, in the ark! The covenant is ever honourable, fulfilled, unbroken, and made glorious on her behalf, in the Person of Christ; and while this remains, whatever may transpire, the presence of the ark confirms to Israel the presence of Him who has promised, "Certainly I will be with thee."

But not only in the work of the Holy Comforter in his first guidings of each member of the mystical body of Christ into all truth, which shall assuredly take effect in every appointed son in due time. But also it was then, the delight of our glorious Wisdom, to present to himself the Church in all her appointed times of need; and under all her conditions in her wanderings, and her pilgrimage, as she travels home to her Father's house. And as He beheld her then, the love of His heart constrained Him to say at every step, "Certainly I will be with thee."

Look, my brother, at a few. Still bearing in mind that it is all opening to thee daily, to the very moment, and in the exactest mea-

sure, as it was all weighed out for thee, in the eternal covenant; and therefore, be it what it may, although it break thy heart, and thy bones too (Ps. li. 8), it must, it shall, it cannot but work together for thine everlasting good.

Oh thou dear Comforter, sweetly lift up the Light of life in the troubled heart of each weary one, who reads or listens to these lines; that they may have a little reviving, in the precious knowledge of the fulness of the divine "Certainly" of our most glorious Christ.

He saw you then, my brother, who art now travelling through some dark and cloudy dispensation. He saw all thy heart-sinkings, and heart-sickness too; and as he gazed upon thy doubtful footsteps he said, "Certainly I will be with thee!" Has he ever failed thee yet? and shall He, for the first time, now?

But the enemy cometh in like a flood! He saw it all, and delighted in the power of His own Almighty arm, and the blessed effect of His standard! Thy time of conflict—yea, though the enemy may seem for a time to engulph thee in his flood—yet thy time of greatest need, is His time of greatest glory. It is when he has suffered thee to sink so low as to be "ready to perish," He smiling whispers, "Certainly I will be with thee!"

But you know not the extent or overwhelming nature of my trouble! dear brother. I know, and so did David, what it is to be IN THE MIDST of trouble! Troubles above—all dark! troubles below—the very mouth of hell vawning as though it must swallow Troubles behind—ten thousand things that seem to hunt thee as for thy life, memory's whole record a blotted scroll that seems to follow as a witness of death against thee. On the right hand, the accuser of the brethren to resist thee. On thy left hand, a painted sepulchre of a pharisee to taunt thee, and say in thy distress, Ah! ah! Before thee a sea of sorrow deep and broad. Poor sinking one. He saw thee in this sad case too; and delighted to behold the order and beauty He would bring out of thy confusion and blackness. Still stamping his precious promise on every gloomy picture, in living letters of untarnishable glory, "Certainly I will be with thee." What says David, when by faith he could read the glowing words, "Though I walk through the midst of trouble. thou wilt revive me! Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me!" (Psal. exxxviii. 7.) all glory to his name.

But he leaves me so long, in such a state, that "I perish with hunger." Wait, my brother, He saw thee then! He sees thee now! The same mind is in Him now, as then. He saw it was good for

thee to FAST long. Long fasting causes the prodigal to arise. "HE suffered thee to hunger." Love does all. But now mark the blessedness, "Certainly I will be with thee," still makes all secure, for it is written, "The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish!" (Prov. x. 3). My brother! allow me to add here—and this is my sole reason for constantly leading your mind back to the delight which our glorious Mediator took in bringing up all these wonderful leadings, which are manifested in His people here, and going over them, before one of his suffering members was called into existence in time. You will never learn Paul's divine art of contentment, until you can go and take yours eat by the side of our everloving Immanuel at the council table, and look with Him over the covenant ordered in all things and sure; morning by morning and know the truth of that declaration, which has puzzled so many wise and prudent people, who have not, and know nothing of, a covenant life-being in Christ Jesus, "The thing that hath been, it is that which [the covenant said] SHALL be; and that which is done, is that which [the covenant said] SHALL be done! and there is no new thing under the sun!" Men may cavil as much as they please. and the children of God may, and will, bring their carnal reason to bear on a thousand things, and say, This was wrong, That was a mistake, How happy should I have been, had I followed in such a path! But, beloved brother, the Lord help thee to cease from man, especially from the "old man" thy corrupt companion, and listen to the question the Holy Ghost puts to thee; "Is there anything whereof it may be said, see this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us," (Eccl. i. 9, 10.) Where? In the council, purpose, and covenant of Jehovah, and before it came to Though it be as bitter as Peter's sieve! terrible as the childrens' fire! awful as all that happened to, and worked in Jonah! or fearful as the lions' den! every toss in the sieve, every flame in the fire, every wave in the sea, and conflict in Jonah's heart, and every lion in the den, were appointed, provided against, and measured out, when Jesus first beheld his Bride in all, and said, "Certainly I will be with thee." FOR WHAT PURPOSE, we shall see in next Lecture; "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Amen.

IMMANUEL'S PROMISE TO HIS BRIDE.

(No. 4.)

" Certainly I will be with thee!"-Exodus iii. 12.

THERE is but one line of teaching by which we can learn the incalculable preciousness of Christ. But this is such a way that every child of God, if left to himself, would go without that most blessed of all knowledge, rather than get it in this only possible way. I speak of a knowledge, now, in the living spiritual experience of the heart, altogether distinct from a mere mental apprehension of the subject in the head. I speak here of a knowledge as distinct and as different, as that which fills the mind of a spectator as he looks on. and understands by observation, the affliction exhibited by a tender mother as she gazes in brokenness of heart at the last struggles of that helpless, dying, idol of a babe, which is being torn from her by the terrible hand of death, and the crushing feeling of all-absorbing despair which overflows the bursting heart of the mother herself. A true knowledge of the Person of Christ is a real spiritual feeling, and not merely an idea in the mind. Since, however, we should never seek or find this divine knowledge if left to ourselves; how blessed it is to know, that while Christ is made unto us righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, He is also made of God unto us wisdom: so that our folly shall not mar our inheritance, or spoil us of our blessings.

In getting our knowledge of his sweet suitability and preciousness, it shall be found that the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Christ, shall be fulfilled to the letter; "He must increase, but I must decrease." And you will find it daily realized, my brother, for, that we may grow up into a true knowledge of our all in Him! down, down, must we go, into the lowest depths of positive nothingness, before we shall rise to the stature of men in the fulness which is in Christ Jesus. It is, that we may enter a little into the blessed teaching which brings a poor sinner to this point, that we turn to-day by the help of the Holy Comforter, and look over THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH Immanuel is ever with his Bride.

Cheer up, my poor and needy brother, we have a subject before us to contemplate, which shall prove most consoling to thy troubled heart, as the Lord the Spirit shall cause the oil of joy to flow. Paul had learned the golden lesson, and he sums it up in this most precious statement, "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." It will therefore appear, that He who has, and feels the greatest amount of needs, will know most [The Gospel Cottage Lecture, No. 45.

of the endeared suitability of Christ! This is the way to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And it is that He may supply our EVERY need, that He has said, "Certainly I will be with thee."

Now mark, my dear brother. I know you are perplexed because certain states of experience seem to grow upon you, and from these things you draw conclusions against hope, as though you were rather going backward, than growing in grace. What is it? Oh, say you, MY BARRENNESS! But what if this shall prove to be the very thing which makes Christ so abundantly suitable to you, and yourself so exactly suitable to Him? It is so. And the issue of the teaching shall prove that the more barren you become in feeling IN YOURSELF, the more fruitful will you discover yourself to be IN CHRIST; and the more will you prize his dear promise, "Certainly I will be with thee."

There are two words, my brother, I would write upon the tablet of thy troubled heart, in letters of divine fire—they are these—

"HIS FULNESS."

Wherever Christ is, He is there with his fulness, for the EXPRESS PURPOSE of supplying our EMPTINESS. Here is the blessedness of the whole subject. He has said, "Certainly I will be with thee." But He cannot leave his fulness behind! He is therefore with us at all times—the Lord the Spirit fix it upon your heart, my brother!—Infinitely full for our sakes, of all that we are daily feeling ourselves to be empty of! This truth, known in its preciousness, will bring a child of God to see, that it is, after all his bitter conclusions, the most blessed thing that can happen to him to be quite empty. And why? As a vessel of mercy—a vessel to honour—he is only fit for the Master's use as he is perfectly empty!

Now, my brother, what say you to your emptiness? What is it makes you sad daily? You will see by-and-by that the Holy Comforter by his blessed work and ministry, is teaching you by all your bitter feelings of empty helplessness, that because you are just what you feel yourself to be, you are a vessel thereby suited to honour Him; and fit for his use and glory! And allow me to add, it matters not in what way this knowledge is brought about, whether it be by afflictions, either in body, soul, or circumstances; temptations, fiery and fearful; thorns in the flesh, with the messenger, even Satan, buffetting; dark, freezing nights of desertion; in the deep with Jonah; in the den with Daniel; in the dungeon with

Jeremiah; at Horeb with Elijah; with Jacob at Peniel; with David under the curses of Shimei; or with Job in the ashes. All must tend to this one point, a knowledge of our total emptiness, that we may have capacity to receive "of his fulness." Let me remark here, it is not our of his fulness He gives nothing out of Himself! It is because you are in Him, my brother, that you know and feel your spiritual emptiness. But how inestimable the truth! we cannot be in Him, and not "of his fulness be receiving," at all times! Although, it may not be in the enjoyment of the same.

Now, to bring the matter home, let us go over a few of those spiritual things after which we are, as new creatures, constantly looking, but which, while we look into ourselves for them, finding we have them not, we cry out, "My leanness! my leanness!"

We begin with that with which God begins in us-life! spiritual divine life! Now it is thy daily complaint, that thou art so dead. Only now and then, a few short moments of sweet and unctious reviving under the anointings of the Holy Comforter; and these dear visits so few, and often so far between, that little-faith languishes, and seems almost ready to expire. But what strong consolation is there for thee, my brother, even in this state of things? life is hid with Christ in God!" and his rich promise, "Certainly I will be with thee," confirms to thee the glory of thy security in all blessedness, for He is with thee FOR THIS PURPOSE, that He may contain, preserve, and sustain thy spiritual life and being in Himself. Yea, lest any hurt it, HE KEEPS it night and day. Thou feelest thy emptiness of life in thyself necessarily, because all the fulness of thy life and liveliness is in Him; and it is only as the Spirit draws thee up out of thyself; and all calculations about thyself, drawn from what thou seest and feelest of emptiness in thyself, to a precious faith's apprehension of Christ and his fulness, that thy emptiness becomes to thee what it truly is at all times, your meetness for the honourable use of the dear Redeemer, that He may fill thy empty vessel with his own life, and cause his heavenly treasure to shine there, to the praise and glory of his grace. How simple are these things, and yet how hard a matter it is to get firmly hold upon the simple subject, so as to say with Paul, "I have learned, that in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Again, another comes with the complaint, "Oh, but I am so DARK in my mind, I seem to be all confusion, surely the Lord's dear children who are living NEAR TO HIM cannot feel as I do." Thou art empty in thyself of spiritual light! Does not this at once show thee the blessedness of the sweet promise, "Certainly I will be with

thee?" Yes, and for this very purpose, that of my fulness thy empty vessel may receive. True, thou art all darkness in thyself, but thou art light in the Lord. It is in his light thou seest thine own pitiful emptiness. Well, says one, I cannot understand it. If Jesus was with me, should I not be able to see Him? But He has said, "Lo. I am with you always;" and He is the faithful Promiser. There is not a moment that He is absent from thee; and all fulness of light dwells in Him; and thou art in Him, and therefore it is in his spiritual light of life, thou seest thine own emptiness of light, which thou callest thy darkness. It is this very condition, however, that makes Him so suitable to thee, and thyself meet for his use and glory. True, He is not always shining so as to give thee the joy of his light. For, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him." Still we can see the darkness, and feel it too. Moreover, while we seem to have a little light in ourselves, which is generally used to ransack our past experience, to try to find some sure nail to hange upon, we do not go to the Lord, or rather stand still in our helplessness, lest we should fall into some pit by moving, and call out in carnest for the Lord to appear, because we are perfectly dark. But after all our deep and often gloomy search is brought to a close, by our little taper light, which we seemed to have in self, going out, then, being quite empty once more, we are fit for the Master's use And in his own time, He shows us Himself afresh, when, for a little season, all is light, because Christ is all. But now, say dear little-faith, do not all his dear shinings always come in this way? does it not follow, then, to be feelingly quite dark is to be in the most blessed condition, next to the enjoyment of communion in Him. "Waiting for his salvation!" "He must increase, I must decrease."

Again, LOVE is another stumbling-block in the way of God's people, because they forget that all true spiritual love, is the "love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." "We love Him because He first loved us." He loves us into Himself, and then by faith apprehending his Person and his fulness, we love Him, and one another in Him, "with a pure heart, fervently." But, then, this love in its sweet and manifest flowing, in endeared communion, is constantly at a very low ebb. Indeed, in a general way, when we search our hearts for a little glowing spark of it, our report registers EMPTY! Then Satan begins to taunt. "What, you a child of God! look at your heart, you have no more love to God in it, than I have!" says the malicious accuser. And until somewhat acquainted with his devices, little-faith sinks, and begins to despair. Yet, look, my brother, you have felt your

heart glow with love, and your spirit melt into sweet and blessed contrition under its dear flowings? "Yes," you will say, "but was it truly from the Lord?" Can you get it back at will? or by going over the same circumstances that then produced it? "No." say you, "I go again and again to the wonderful word, or promise, or vision of faith, which melted my heart into love then, but now, all remains as hard as an adamant!" How blessed then, is the truth in all its fulness, as it is in Christ. The more completely empty thou art feeling thyself to be, my trembling brother, of the sweet manifest flowings of this divine love, the more truly suitable art thou for the honour that our precious Christ puts upon his dearly loved vessels of mercy, thus made meet for his use! What is it makes fleshly, unconverted, spiritually dead professors of religion, always so easy and so content with their state before God? Simply this, the devil has set up in their hearts, an idol called Christ, formed and compounded by the letter of God's word, in such proportions, and with such Satanic skill, as almost to deceive the very elect; which, because it coincides with the natural minds of natural men, is wershipped, and beloved with a natural love, which they are deceived by the father of lies, to believe is loving God. Some call Popery the master-piece of hellish craft, I confess I must differ with them. It is indeed the devil's master-piece, so far as IMPUDENCE is concerned. But the so-called piety of our day is certainly the masterpiece of Satan for cunning, because the counterfit comes nearest to the genuine current-coin of the kingdom of God. Put, however, by the side of this "Idol Christ" of men's exalting, the Christ of God, whom He hath exalted far above all heavens, and proclaimed to be the Founder of the earth, and the Builder of the heavens (Heb. i. 10), and the Husband of his One Bride (Eph. v. 25), the Head of his one body (1 Cor. xii. 12, &c.,) whom Alone He came to redeem, and for whom Alone (John xvii. 19,) He lives to intercede. Now observe, my brother, where is the love of a natural man? In bitter enmity they exclaim to a man, "We will not have this man to reign over us!"

But now mark the difference, a poor broken-hearted sinner, who has striven with all his might to save himself by man's rules, who, having spent all his substance upon physicians of no value, yet is daily growing worse in his own apprehension, instead of getting better; suddenly hears a whisper in his soul—a small still voice—saying, "Sinner! thou art meditating terror! because thou art empty, defiled, helpless, condemned! But look unto me and be ye saved. I bore your griefs, and carried your sorrows; the chastise-

ment of your peace was upon me, and by my bitter stripes ye are healed. My people, for whom I bled, whose debt I paid, shall be willing in the day of my power!" Art thou willing, poor sinner? Behold then, "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." It is God that worketh in thee to will; and this willingness, although thou art empty at present of the power "to do," is an unmistakable evidence that LOVE is yours.

How widely different is the state of mind or soul in this poor trembling sinner, to that which is discoverable in all who are not under divine teaching, and yet are religious. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his distresses." And "he weeps to the praise of the mercy he has found." But what has made all the difference between the two? Is it not this true RMP-TINESS in the broken-hearted one? "The full soul loatheth (margin. treadeth under foot) the honey-comb; [the sweet and lovely Christ of God], but to the hungry [or to the empty] soul, every bitter thing is sweet!" Yes, every bitter cross and chastisement as they whisper to faith, "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." The testimony that he is after all a son, causes sweetness to spring up in the midst of his bitters. Especially as faith gets fast hold of the promise, and a little knowledge of the emptying process is obtained. though all that is blessed in experience seems to be ebbing away, yet the living one hangs upon the well-known faithfulness of the PROMISER! and believes He is still true to his covenant-engagement, "Certainly I will be with thee." Added to which, littlefaith is beginning to understand the dear secret that HIS FULNESS is always the same; and that He only waits for the renewed, complete development of our EMPTINESS, again and again, to open his precious heart afresh, and so to let us again know, by the running over of our little cup, " That ALL our springs are IN HIM!" My brother, this is blessed living. I know it is true. And although the emptiness is, in itself, a bitter sensation, yet it makes Christ and HIS FULNESS of more value than ten thousand empires to a child of God.

I know there are some high-flying doctrinal professors who would say to me, "Oh, this is childish nonsense! I am always empty, and think nothing about it. My fulness is in Christ, I want none in myself." I answer, I believe what you say is true, you are ALWAYS EMPTY! But if you had known but once in your life, what it is, like Naphtali, to be "SATISFIED with favour, and FULL with the blessings of that Lord," you would find spiritual emptiness to be the same thing as spiritual hunger and thirst, the one as it increases

in intensity, drawing out momentary desires after Christ the bread of life, and the other causing thee to "open thy mouth" with many a living cry, "and to PANT incessantly until the fountain of life is again opened to thee, so that thou canst drink and Forget thy

poverty, and remember thy misery no more."

Again, REACE is another blessedness which often causes the Lord's little ones much perplexity, especially that precious word (Isa. xxvi. 3), "Thou wilt KEEP him in PERFECT peace, whose mind is staved on thee; because he trusteth in thee." Satan, the accuser. will often point to the state of warfare, into which we are compelled to go forth day by day, and ask the question "where is your perfect peace? It is clear your mind is not stayed on the Lord, or you would not be so full of tossings as you are." But look again, my brother, where are you as a new-creature, "KEPT." " preserved in Jesus Christ?" then add to this the testimony of the Holy Ghost by the Apostle, "For He [Christ] is our peace, who hath made both one." Whatever then may be going on in yourself of fightings and of warfare, your PERFECT peace is to be found only in "His FULNESS!" not in your FEELING OF PEACE in the enjoyment of it! but by faith laying hold of the Person of Christ, and apprehending the blessedness, that as we stand in newness of life in Him, "Our warfare is accomplished;" all that could make us enemies to God has been put eternally away by Christ. So that now we live at all times in a perfect state of reconciliation to our God and Father in Christ; and never, by any means, can become unreconciled again. This is to live in perfect unbroken PEACE WITH GOD. And thou shalt find, my brother, that it is THY EMPTINESS of the sweet and joyful feeling of this peace, that makes the realization of it by faith. when the Spirit takes of Christ, and shows Him unto you, so abundantly precious! Moreover, this sight of thy perfect peace will often produce in thy soul, even though before all be confusion, a great calm!

Moreover, RIGHTEOUSNESS, the sweet and eternal companion of peace! "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Oh, my brother, what a glorious and unfading reality is that most sublime fulness which is in Christ. You and I, poor and needy, hell-deserving sinness, as we are in ourselves, thus found in Christ, are made the righteousness of God in Him! Ourselves all fair! Now mark the meeting-place! It is in the Person and fulness of Christ. We—his chosen members—his beloved bride—MADE THE RIGHTECOUNNESS OF GOD—meet in his divine Person—Himself OUR PEACE—OUR BRIDEGROOM! and kiss EACH OTHER there! I confess, as these royal and trancendent privileges open to my mind, I can but

bow my head in sacred wonder and astonishment, and say, "What hath God wrought?" "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one!" What is there in all the world, my dear brother, worth a thought, compared with such an excellent knowledge as this? How did it inflame the heart of the great Apostle? "But what things were again to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count ALL THINGS but loss [here is perfect emptiness, that he may have abundant room for Christ for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: FOR WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS." Blessed condition! The Lord grant us, my brother, a more simple, child-like knowledge of this most enviable estate, to be totally empty! for it is only so. we can truly perceive the true greatness of the precious promise, " Certainly I will be with thee!" " Not having mine own righteousness," says the Apostle. Mark the sweet truth here. Our adorable Christ does not put his spotless robe over our filthy rags. He-by his Spirit-strips them all off, then washes us eternally clean—as clean as He Himself is !—and then clothes us with Himself, our Righteousness! and having done so, as our Peace, our loving Friend and Husband, He gives us a confirming kiss! the preciousness of which no words can paint; therefore the Church exclaims, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine."

But finally, my dear brother, the Lord help thee to glory in the wonderful revelations of the love of Christ manifested in the truth. That it is for this very purpose He is ever WITH US. That HIS FUL-NESS may be ever filling up our EMPTINESS. Apply it then to all other needs, which thy own emptiness suggests, still He is Jesus. the same. We need patience—He is full of this grace for our supply. We need faith—He is the ever-full Author and Finisher of all true faith in us. We need hope—He is our ever-full fountain of hope. We need repentance—He is exalted our Prince and Saviour, to supply of his fulness, this precious dissolving grace also. We need pardons—He is full of multiplied pardons! and mercy—full! for us. We, poor fools, need wisdom—bless his precious Person—He is full of all, infinitely glorious wisdom! Mark, not for Himself alone -indeed eternity shall never find Him alone! Union has made it impossible! Whatever He is, or has, since it is in union of life and blessedness, He fulfils his "Certainly I will be with thee." even to his boundless riches, power, and faithfulness. "All are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

His sweet peace RULE in your hearts. Amen.

JOY IN GOD.

(No. 1.)

"And not only so, but we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."—Rom. v. 11.

How blessed, the hope of a child of God! while in himself he is the daily subject of darkness of mind, coldness of heart, tossing with tempests both from within and from without, floods of temptation, the risings of unbelief, and sometimes the out-burstings of rebellion on account of the roughness and perplexities of the pilgrim path! How blessed the hope of a child of God! How precious the knowledge of the foundation upon which the expectations of the troubled one are built! How glorious the reality, when apprehended by faith, that all these changing circumstances are in effect as nothing! at most they are but as a passing vapour which for a few moments obscures our ever-green prospect, and chills our frail breasts because it seems to drink up the warm rays of our sunshine, or hide his glories as with a thick cloud. No, the absence of these things which make life bitter, yea more, the absence of that daily working of the law of sin in our members, which causeth us to cry out, "O wretched man that I am!" is not our hope! The hope of a child of God is far more blessed than the removal of the whole burden of these passing things could be! We read (Rev. xii. 1,) of "a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet." It is blessed that the church thus stands in her new creatureship position, with all that can change, like the moon under her feet; but this is not the foundation of her Her enduring glory is her golden raiment, unchangeblessedness. able! divine! How blessed! such then is the hope of a child of God.

This fifth chapter of that profound epistle to the Romans opens with some most glorious conclusions drawn from the statement contained in the last verse of the preceding chapter. "Who was defined in the last verse of the Deceding Chapter. "Who was defined in the last verse of the preceding chapter. "Who was defined in the last verse of the preceding chapter. "Who was defined in the last verse of the preceding chapter. "Who was defined in the last verse of the preceding chapter."

livered for our offences." Hence it follows upon the simplest grounds of common justice, that those for whose offences Christ was delivered into the hands of God's inflexible justice, cannot be again themselves delivered into the hands of the same justice who has already inflicted the full penalty due to those offences in and upon their most blessed Surety. It was the numbering upon the head of Jesus, or the "causing to meet upon him the iniquity of us all," whereby our covenant God and Father "made HIM to be SIN for us, who [in himself] knew no sin: that WE might be made the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD in him," (2 Cor. v. 21.) Therefore Paul writes "Who was delivered for our offences, and [because justice was eternally satisfied by the sufferings he endured for our offences was raised again for our justification." resurrection and exaltation to the right-hand of the majesty on high in our very nature, even as Stephen testifies, saying, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The justice of God has been declared eternally satisfied, and therefore, every sinner who had a covenant being in Jesus Christ as he stood forth "The second man, the Lord from heaven." The head of his body the Church, was by the resurrection of Jesus declared to be eternally just, eternally spotless, no more to be even accused before God: as it is written. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" If God will not, if Justice cannot, since the entire body of the sin of the whole Church was atoned for by Jesus when He " Put away sin by the sacrifice of himself?" what is the glorious consequence?-The Lord help every troubled, burdened sinner to weigh the infinite blessedness of this mighty fact—Christ PUT AWAY sin! The sin of his church once met upon him, every sin of that church, past, present, and to come! By one mighty act Immanuel, our glorious deliverer PUT AWAY that sin. Where did He put it? listen poor sinner! Look towards the east, contemplate, if you can, the boundary where infinite space ceases to exist: now turn to the west and do the same, then measure the distance made up by these two infinites! Now what says the precious word of God, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed, or 'put away' our transgressions from us." Then, whatever men may say, or we may feel on account of that sin which daily causeth us to groan being burdened, yet, if we are in Christ Jesus, we stand in Him. and are at all times beheld by God our Father in Him, as spotless as Christ himself, and therefore eternally justified. "Complete in Him."

Now, here is the foundation for true comfort, whatever may be going on in the clay tabernacle! Here is that which will make us sing sweetly as we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil. Yea, more. Here is that which shall lift up the head when the great trumpet shall be blown—and praises to his mercy, there is no reason why we should not as triumphantly waive before Him our palm-branch of victory now! for John sings, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: BECAUSE AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD," (1 John iv. 16, 17.) Think, poor broken-hearted fellow sinner, what a privilege it is to be brought to live in the apprehension of this rich mercy daily! and are there any who live thus? do you enjoin? yes, many. Who are they? monks and nuns? No. They are a little "band of men whose hearts the Lord hath touched," who are daily engaged in the heat of the battle, fighting in a warfare in which there is no discharge in this wilderness, against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Constantly shouting, on the one hand, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me;" (Mic. vii. 8.) and on the other, with the eye fixed upon the Captain of our salvation, and mingled with many a song of victory, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe."

Paul sweetly, led by the Holy Ghost brings before the Church of God the blessedness of thus living, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, "Therefore," he begins "being [thus] justified, by faith [apprehending the perfection of this justification, we discover that as sin is the only thing that can produce alienation from God; and now, believing that there is no longer any sin existing in its condemning power between God and those who were in Christ Jesus when he put away sin, and for whom he obeyed, suffered, died, and rose again; and in whose name He is now exalted in full possession of the "great reward," even at the right-hand of our eternally well-pleased God and Father in Him: We are constrained to come to the astonishing conclusion, that however much of warfare may be daily going on between the flesh and the Spirit in us; "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the thing that ye would," (Gal. v. 17.) Yet, on the apprehension of our justification, we are admitted by faith into the present knowledge and enjoyment of the unalterable blessedness, that at all times, we are at, and have eternal] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Out of this arises the next step in the apostle's beautiful argument. "By whom also we have access into this grace." Here is the second present blessedness flowing down to the Church by virtue of her justification, being "perfect in Christ Jesus," (Col. i. 28.) She no longer stands without as a convicted criminal, or as an enemy to God by wicked works, but as a well-beloved, accepted, reconciled child, sweetly looking upwards and admiring herself in the beauty of Christ, (Ezek. xvi. 14,) as she walks into her paternal home she feels that it would be casting a reproach upon her wonderful husband; were she to entertain a thought, that, as she now comes, cleansed by his precious blood, robed in his princely righteousness, called by his name (Jer. xxx. 16) she could meet with any repulse, No. With a bounding heart, and in child-like simplicity, she now draws near, saying, "Abba, dear Father, behold and smile upon thy little one, look upon my beautiful garments, dost not thou smell the incense in my precious robe? I am come, Abba dear Father at thy command, thou didst say "come near now and kiss me my son." "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed," (Gen. xxvii. 26.) Behold thy little one has come up this morning to present his song of praise, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Amen, Abba dear Father. And now behold, I present my petition to thee. "Thou knowest my frame, thou rememberest I am but dust." Thou hast said "Jehovah will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Behold, Holy Father, thy little one draws near to thee, walking by simple faith in the uprightness of thy well-beloved Son. "Remember the word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope." I call upon thee for "more grace," that I may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, that being at eternal peace with thee in Jesus my peace, the peace of God may RULE in my heart." Thus we have access by faith into this precious grace of peace.

But, moreover, the apostle adds, "Wherein we stand." Opening to us thereby the immutability of this grace, from which we learn. that it does not depend on our fluctuating enjoyment of it! neither upon our holding fast our confidence in the assured belief of it. Unbelief may and will often prevail to dash our hope in the glorious privilege, especially when the fiery darts of the wicked one are flying around us, and those things are stirring within, which sometimes terrify the Lord's children, lest they should prevail. this precious "Wherein we stand" carries us up and out of ourselves, again, into that fulness of perfection we have as "Justified from all things," (Acts xiii. 39.) "Justified freely by his grace." (Rom. iii. 24.) And here as the eye of our understandings become enlightened by the teaching and ministry of "The Spirit of truth," who guideth into all truth, faith gathers strength to lay hold of the fulness of the unchanging mercy, that at all times we are standing in this grace of peace in unbroken continuance, as it is written, "Thou wilt keep him in PERFECT PEACE whose mind is staved on thee." This cannot be that ever changing frame of soul which we call peace, and which we are now and then endulged with when the Lord is sweetly communing with us. No. But it is that "Peace of God which passeth all understanding." "Wherein we stand," as we are in eternal union with the Son of God, and therefore at all times accepted in Him, "The Beloved;" not according to what we are in ourselves in any respect, but according as we are beheld by God our Father in the perfections and beauty of Christ.

The apostle now introduces another link in the golden chain of mercy. "And rejoice for exult, or boast in hope of the glory of God." But when is it we exult in the prospect before us? while pouring over the ever-varying things of time? no, but rather "while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, [bless the Lord for this mercy, it is only just for an inch of time we are to be tormented with changeable nothings, but the things which are not seen are eternal, unchangeable, impollutable, inexhaustable, and that cannot be lost or forfeited; since they have been made over to the church under covenant engagements, which have been fulfilled by our glorious head, on our behalf; so that now, they have become our own property in the person of our elder Brother, who having taken possession in our own nature, and in our name, ever lives, delighting to claim for us that which our God and Father equally delights to fulfil; namely, those great and precious promises. given unto us in Christ. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things [his counsel and his oath] in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the Hope set before us;" so that, having the consolation and good hope through grace, revealed to faith, and knowing also the previous links which render all secure, we look forward over and beyond narrow boundaries of time, and exult in the glory of God; both in that eternal weight of glory which is the portion of the church, and also that exceeding glory which will ever redound to the great Jehovah in Trinity and Unity, arising out of the depths of the riches both of wisdom and knowledge developed in that sacred plan of redemption, which shall eternally manifest the unsearchable riches of the grace of God, in his kingdom to us in Christ Jesus.

Here the dear apostle seems to be brought to a stand. Knowing as he did, more fully than any of the Lord's children in our day can know, the truth of that word, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." But what are we to say, Paul, to the constant repetition in a thousand various ways of tribulation upon tribulation? If we are, as you represent us, thus justified, at peace with God, having free and sweet access into that grace, standing so securely in it, and exulting in the Hope set before us; all of which prove us to be the especial favourites of God! How is it we are such tempest-tossed, tribulated people as our daily experiences prove us to be? Paul seems to have been led by the blessed Spirit to perceive this objection, which cannot but present itself to every exercised mind. How full of sweet teaching and comfort is his answer to it.

Yes, says the apostle, it is quite true "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" and a cup full of it too. This, however, is not inconsistent with the glorious nature of our resurrection-blessedness as new creatures in Christ Jesus. Indeed, so far from these accumulating tribulations being opposed to such views of our immutable standing, completeness, security, and blessedness as justified believers, they are rather consequences, full of mercy, arising out of the same fountain of everlasting love from which flows to us all good things. Therefore the apostle goes on to say, "And not only so, but we glory [or boast or exult] in tribulations also:" not that Paul could reverse the actual sensations of sorrow and distress under which we groan amidst the daily pressure of tribulating circumstances, No. He felt as keenly as any could do the "Thorn in the flesh," the messenger Satan sent to buffet him; but by faith, and under the

precious ministry and teaching of the Holy Ghost, he was led to draw right conclusions with reference to the design his covenant God had in view, in so ordering the course of event, that he should be constantly kept in the furnace of affliction.

Now that he could clearly trace the grounds of his eternal justification, with all that fulness of blessing here, and certainty of eternal glory to come; together with that peace which passeth all understanding, centreing as all does in the person and finished work of a precious Christ, he was constrained to look upon the almighty Governor of all things as his friend, and to say, when each fresh cross was laid upon his weary shoulder, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good." He could sing, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Therefore, whatever, for his sake, as I thus live, I am called to pass through, it must be all to the praises of the glory of his grace: for he gives no grace to lie dormant in the soul. No, but that it may be actively manifested. "For by the grace af God I am what I am." I know I am called by his grace, and I know by the daily outgoings of desire after communion with Him that I love my ever precious Christ; therefore "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," added to which, I know, that being a called one, that precious scripture is my own property, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in ALL THINGS and sure," (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) Can these things which are my daily burden, over which I have no power, but under which I am constantly crying and groaning in bitterness of spirit, be left out of that capacious ALL? Impossible! The Lord help each exercised one to follow the apostle through the steps of instruction, the Holy Ghost has given us with regard to tribulation, viewed thus in connection with eternal deliverance from offences, eternal justification, and eternal peace, in which we stand, so that each one may be brought up to this sweet standard of a man in Christ to say, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing-by the same divine teaching which brought Paul to this conclusion; that tribulation worketh PATIENCE."

Ah, says one, I have been following you up to this point, fearing that before you concluded you would show me that I am not in the right path; now you have quite cut me off, for I find that instead of patience, my tribulations have a directly opposite effect; they make me as rebellious and fretful as a spoiled child.

Be not in haste, it will yet appear that "Tribulation worketh patience."

There is an all-important and distinguishing feature of difference between those who are making a mere natural profession of the doctrines of the Gospel, and those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus. In the first, it is the old heart that is acted upon, the old nature that is made religious, by a course of natural warning, by which a moral change is wrought, just in the same way that Plato. Aristotle, and others made converts to, and trained people up, in their systems of philosophy. Not so in a person who is truly born again from above, they are made partakers of a new nature, "a new heart will I give them;" and in all such there is ever present with them, until they sleep in Jesus, two natures waring against each other. Now it is the presence of this new nature which Paul calls the "new man," and the "hidden man," which forms the distinction between the naturally religious and the truly spiritual person. It is a very common thing to see a naturally religious person so brought under the influence of a sense of duty, as to submit patiently to many tribulations, and by so doing, seemingly to put to shame the poor child of God who is driven by similar things to his "wit's end," (Psal. cvii. 27.) But where is Satan "the accuser of the brethren," (Rev. xii. 10,) working in these? puffing them up with pride and self-righteousness at the progress they make in patience! whereas while the "new man" if growing in the grace of patience, under the working of tribulation, the malicious accuser is ever stirring up the flesh to rebellion, and then pointing to his own works therein, filling by his accusations the mind of the troubled child of God with dismay, as though it was of fleshly patience the apostle is writing. No, it is spiritual, in the "new man," the "hidden man of the heart;" who, while the flesh which profiteth nothing (John vi. 63,) is full of impatience, is patiently waiting and quietly hoping for the coming of the Lord to deliver and speak peace. The Lord grant us a further opening of this important truth in our next; for this must be understood before we can Joy in God. Now unto him, &c., (Jude, ver. 24, 25.)

٠,

JOY IN GOD.

(No. 2.)

"And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.—Romans v. 11.

ONE of the most difficult lessons, and yet one of the most valuable. so far as his present comfort is concerned, that a child of God has to learn, is, that by the new life which he receives at his regeneration, by the grace given to him therein, and by the great and glorious things which by the ministry of the Spirit are opened to his renewed understanding, "The flesh profiteth nothing!" (John vi. 63.) It seems again and again, as though it must be a mistake, as though it must be wrong, that the old Ethiopian should remain as black as ever. Yet the daily experience of every living child of God proves that such is the case, however bitterly he may lament it; yea, my brother, the brighter the true light shineth in thy spiritual mind, the BLACKER will all that belongs to the flesh appear. But then, let us not forget the sure mercies of David which accompany every such discovery. As the flesh grows in its apparent deformity, in like proportion does the holy indignation of the new man gain strength; the more vehement are the cries to the Strong for strength against the hated enemies of our own house, even of our own hearts; the more seduously watchful is the living one over "the man of wicked devices," even over "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and the more successful the daily struggles of the soul, to put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man; and being renewed [daily] in the spirit of our minds, we—through grace—put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," (Ep. iv. 22, 24.) Be not cast down, dear little faith, thou shalt find that the way to put off the old man grows out of a knowledge of him. When you have fully discovered what a thief he is, you will THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER. No. 47.

not trust him a moment. There are no devices so deceiving as those adopted by the old man, when he comes with his fawning piety and promises to be good; by this means he will entangle thee in the meshes of his Pharisaism, then puff thee up with pride, which finally leads to a departure in some way from "the simplicity that is in Christ," or perhaps to something worse—a plunge into some filthy ditch of sin! I tell you, my brother—however much you may kick against the continuance of such a state of things—the safest ground on which you can stand, day by day, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, is the BATTLE-FIELD! Experiencing the truth of the Apostle's declaration. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the thing that ye would." Where this is daily felt, there is a continual warfare; and this warfare keeps the spiritual armour bright, the arm of faith strong and active, and above all, keeps up a continual intercourse between the soldier in the field, and the Great Captain at head quarters; for he finds the harder he is pressed in the battle, the more precious becomes the helmet of his salvation, by which his head is covered in the fierce conflict; the more easy and delightfully can he wield the sword of the Spirit; and what is even more conspicuous than all, he finds it is thus he learns the simplicity of that precious art in spiritual warfare, "PRAYING ALWAYS with ALL PRAYER and supplication in the Spirit, and WATCHING thereunto with all PER-SEVERANCE and supplication!" (Eph. vi. 17, 18.) Praying in every possible way, in words and cries, in tears and sighs, in upgoings of desire, in pantings, and longings, and breathings, yea, and sometime in very roarings under a sense of terror and dismay! and in groanings which cannot be uttered; then again in songs of victory or shouts of praise, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. mingles with many a confession from a broken heart, and many a grateful Ebenezer from a contrite spirit. I know what I say, in the daily experience of it; and although I know, if I were left to my own choosing I should not continue another hour on the battlefield, yet I know it is the "Good old way" and "The right way" which leadeth to a city of habitation! The man who is a stranger to these things, can have but one nature in him. Therefore, let him be as pious as one of John Wesley's class leaders, he is at peace with himself, and at peace with the devil, simply because he is not born again from above, and has no new nature in him, to be ever warring against all the doings of the old nature, which he brought with him into this world.

The "not only so" at the commencement of our text led us in last lecture to enquire into those spiritual verities with which Paul opens this chapter, a knowledge of which must precede the full entry of the soul upon the great grace contained in the words before us, namely, "Joy in God."

Resuming our observations on Paul's glorying in tribulations also, because he knew that "tribulation worketh patience," it must be ever borne in mind that it is not fleshly patience the Apostle refers to, but THE GRACE OF PATTENCE; not a patience which may be produced by a philosophical resignation to unavoidable circumstances, as a fatalist will philosophically resign himself to his fate without a murmur. It is a GRACE OF THE SPIRIT. All turns upon this point. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and all that is fleshly is sinful, but that which is born of the Spirit is spiritual pure as its Fountain. Now the work of the Spirit is not in and upon the fleshly part, or the carnal mind of the child of God, but in and upon the "new man;" hence Paul sweetly prays "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the INNER MAN!" (Ep. iii. 14, &c.) Now mark well, my brother. It was, moreover, wholly this "might by His Spirit" in the "inner man," to which Paul refers when telling the Corinthians about his thorn in the flesh. "For this thing" says Paul "I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Now, what if Paul's thorn in the flesh should have been an impatient, nervous, temper—I do not pretend to affirm such was the case, but I put it as an illustration of the point in hand, and suppose it to have been such—could there be a more suitable comment on the words before us—"Tribulation worketh patience!" It is clear that it was in the "Inner man" Paul received strength. It was in the "inner man" grace reigned, therefore it is in the "inner man" we grow in grace. Then, as the patience of which Paul is here speaking is a grace of the Spirit, or a fruit of the Spirit's grace, it is in the "inner man" we must look for this patience, and not in the flesh: since there may be all the patience of a stoic in the flesh, where there is not a single grain of this grace of patience in the heart.

How are we to understand, then, that "Tribulation worketh patience?" Exactly as we see it manifested in Paul's experience.

When the thorn stung him, it made the "inner man" cry out mightily to the Lord for help and deliverance. Suppose this thorn to be impatience in the flesh. The new man in Paul pleads earnestly for spiritual strength to withstand the working of this branch of the "law of sin in his members," which plea amounts to this, that the grace of patience, by the Spirit's might put forth, might rule down and overcome that spirit of sinful, because fleshly impatience, which causes the "new" or "inner man," "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," to groan being burdened.

Here we would enquire of every spiritually living child of God, who suffers continually under the pressure of the warfare between flesh and spirit. Do you not always, in the midst of your complained-of impatience, find and feel an EARNEST INWARD upgoing of soul to the Lord for patience, resignation, and strength? I know you will answer, yes, indeed I do! and the more the fleshly impatience seems to prevail, the louder is the inward cry for deliverance. This is "Tribulation working patience," according to the rule laid down with regard to Paul's thorn in the flesh.

However, we must not stop here, but now, since we see whence arises the true development of spiritual patience, we must proceed another step, and "let patience have her perfect work;" "Tribulation worketh patience, patience EXPERIENCE."

Here again it is spiritual experience, even such as is wrought by the teaching and ministry of the Holy Comforter in the "inner man," through faith, to which the Apostle refers.

To enter into Paul's meaning, we must again listen to what he tells us concerning his experience in connection with "the thorn in his flesh;" after he received that precious answer from the Lord, "My grace is sufficient for thee." We are not, I conceive, for one moment to suppose that Paul felt less acutely the stings of the thorn, or the buffetings of Satan. But by the ministry of the Spirit he had received instruction, and had had fulfilled in himself that sweet prayer which he registered on behalf of the Ephesian Church: " making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Eph. i. 16, &c.) This is the experience which is wrought in the "inner man," by the clear shining of the light of life within. It is the daily opening up, enlarging and enlightening the faculties of the "New man," that gives to the child of God, who is the constant subject of much tri-

bulation, a solid, well-grounded experience in "the things that are freely given to us of God." Thus it is, that the grace of patience, being continually exercised by the unceasing recurrence of tribulations-mark, my brother, it is in the plural-is wrought upon. brought into a vigorous state of being, and so strengthened, that amidst all the bustle and turmoil arising in the soul out of these tribulations, PATIENCE quietly takes her seat at the posts of his doors, who has so often and so sweetly delivered in extremities of past trial, watching and waiting in faith-for faith and patience always work together-the expected and longed-for appearance, either of his mighty hand and outstretched arm to deliver, or else of his blessed Messenger, even the Holy Comforter, who, like Noah's dove, comes in to support the troubled one with a precious promise in his mouth, like an olive leaf of divine peace from the tree of life. to confirm our hope, to strengthen our faith, and to enable patience Thus, "Tribulation worketh patience, to keep her ground. patience experience."

Paul having been thus instructed with regard to the thorn in his flesh: the eyes of his understanding being enlightened, patience so prevailed in his "inner man," that he was enabled to give us that soul-comforting account of his spiritual experience. " Most gladly therefore,"-now that I have received "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ," and am led thereby to apprehend the inexhaustible fulness of the grace of Christ, in the sufficiency of which I stand at all times "complete in Him"-will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches. in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: "for when I am weak, then am I strong!" The Lord help thee rightly to weigh thy crosses, my brother, and thou shalt find the weaker they make thee, the more blessedly will this living spiritual experience of the dear apostle's become thine own. However, of one thing be certain, if thou art at ease, and can be satisfied with speculations on mere doctrine, or prophecy, or times, or seasons, or questions of church government and such things, thou hast no relish for these inward spiritual experiences. It is to those in the furnace of affliction, in fiery trials, in hot temptations, tempest-tossed, and not comforted, the companionship of a Satan-buffetted Paul will be precious.

Good old Mr. Tyndale translated this word "feeling," which sweetly agrees with the true sense of the word, which signifies strictly such a testing or trying of a matter as results in a conclu-

sion which puts it beyond a doubt. Now tribulation under the guidance and ministry of the Spirit, as we have seen in Paul's case, produces this result; they compel the child of God to use up all his cwn efforts to help and deliver himself, which brings him to his "wits' end;" then he cries to the Lord in his trouble; patience has her perfect work, inasmuch as by the Spirit's teaching, in, and through the deep exercise, the soul is brought to know now by personal feeling experience the truth of that which he knew before in theory; that "Salvation is of the Lord!" It is, in fact, the realization by feeling in his own soul of the experiences of God's children, as given to us in the holy word, and in the testimonies of men of God in all ages. What, then, is the result of all this? it not as Paul goes on to describe it? Faith and patience resulting in this true knowledge by spiritual feeling of our eternal standing in the sufficiency of all grace in Christ Jesus, confirms and establishes our, otherwise wavering minds in a "GOOD HOPE THROUGH GRACE." Paul was "brought low," by the tribulation arising out of the thorn of his flesh; he cried to the Lord, and "he helped him," by showing him that henceforth he was to hope for nothing in himself, but sin, death, and misery; but his hope, both for time and for eternity, must find its centre in the infinite sufficiency of all grace in the Person of his most glorious Christ. Thus, "Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope:" and this GOOD HOPE shames not. Brought to abject spiritual beggary in self, having striven to help and deliver one's-self by one's own arm, until all hope of being saved was gone; having teen brought like the prodigal to the last extremity of starvation, we turn to our Father's house for a morsel of bread. Necessity drives, but hope encourages. Satan and unbelief may withstand and tell us it will all result in shame, but bless our gracious God, the issue proves that the worst of our sorrows were but to bring us to a knowledge of the love of a Father's heart towards his prodigal. It was when the father RAN, FELL UPON HIS NECK, and KISSED him! that the prodigal's hope made him not ashamed! What cared he then for the taunts of men or devils? The Father had received him, and declared him safe and sound!

Now look, my brother, at the sweet subject in its simplicity. All this was necessary before the prodigal could JOY IN HIS FATHER. He must go through all this bitter teaching. He must go through "much tribulation;" this tribulation must work in him patience, and afterwards experience, and then hope; then comes the full end—the sweet development of the Lord's design in all. The prodigal

returns, his hope shames him not, for the father's love does for him ten thousand times more than he ever expected or could have asked. Just so was it in the experience of the Apostle, his thorn embittered his life to him, but through this channel the Lord opened the mystery of his infinite love, in providing all-sufficient grace for him in Jesus. He experienced the power of that grace; his hope was confirmed, and proved to be a GOOD HOPE thereby, which caused him to triumph in the God of his mercies. Nor could he be ashamed of his hope, for like the prodigal, his God and Father had received him into the bosom of his love, and the Holy Ghost had so shed abroad the love of God in his heart, that after summing up the blessed subject in a review of the exceeding great kindness manifested towards us in the gift of Christ, and in Christ, of all blessings, "When we were without strength;" "While we were yet sinners;" "When we were enemies," he breaks forth, as well he may, in the words of our text; "And not only so." Great and precious as are these experiences of the love and favour of Jehovah, we have a higher chord to strike vet.—Or, as the prodigal would have said to one with whom he communed after his return, after having gone over the sum total of all the tenderness of his father's kindness towards him, he would have broken forth in a strain far higher than the rest. Yes, but not only so, but I also joy in my father personally! over, and beyond all his gifts! He has received me into his bosom! all his love is mine! He has not only pardoned my sin, but he has given me Himself, in all the freeness and greatness of his heart. Henceforth I live in inseparable oneness with Him—" Not only so. but we also Joy in God!" My brother! the Lord help you to dwell upon the fulness of that little word in! To this point Paul's experience led him, and if you stop short of it, you will find your weary soul tossed about by every wind and wave that overtakes you; and many a bitter conclusion will you draw from the working of that, which, when once centred in this eternal unchangeable blessedness, will appear to be for your souls' good. You will say to me, but I find I cannot get feelingly IN! I have been striving, praying, and pressing for years, and sometimes hope I am IN for a season, and then feel as though I was cast our again! My dear brother, you are looking at it as though it was a thing to be done. You talk about it, like a dear friend, upon whom the Lord was beginning his precious work, once talked to me about election, referring to a person to whom he had been earnestly speaking concerning eternal matters, hoping, in his zeal, to arouse him to a sense of his fearful condition as a sinner, he said to me, "Then I told him, he

could go any day he chose, and offer himself to the Lord and he would elect him as one of his children!" His only notion of election was connected with becoming a candidate for God's favour. And so you speak as though, to Joy IN God, you must first get into Him, but as with election so with our eternal being IN Christ IN God, it is not a thing to be done, but that which the Spirit revealed to faith as having eternally existed in covenant.

Now it is to this point, if the Lord will, in next lecture we shall address ourselves, keeping the experience of Paul with regard to his thorn, and the experience of the returned prodigal before us. Pointing out that we cannot be made partakers of the experience of either the one or the other, without being a partaker of spiritual LIFE, which is to be IN Christ who is our LIFE, which is to be IN God the Father (2 Thess. i. 1.)

"Now unto him," &c. (Jude ver. 24, 25.)

JOY IN GOD.

(No. 3.)

"And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."—Romans v. 11.

Although impelled by hunger to go and cast himself at his feet, yet we may be sure there was no person in the world, whose frown the Prodigal so greatly dreaded as his father's. Dost thou know anything of the fear and dread that filled the heart of the returning Prodigal, my brother? Is it thus with thee now? Dost thou contemplate Jehovah as a terrific Judge now? If thou hadst known what a few moments of precious heart-dissolving communion can do, I know whither the thoughts of thine heart will tend in a moment. As Mr. Erskine sings in one of his truly spiritual sonnets—

"Dost mind the place, the spot of land, Where Jesus did thee meet? And how he won thy heart and hand? Thy Husband then was sweet.

Was such a corner, such a place,
A paradise to thee?
A Pentel, where face to face,
Thy Husband fair didst see.

Couldst thou have said it boldly then,
And seal'd it with thy blood?
Yea, welcome death! with pleasure, when,
Thy Husband by thee stood.

Whate'er thou found'st Him at thy best, He's at thy worst the same; And IN HIS LOVE WILL EVER REST! Thy Husband holds HIS claim."

Jacob never forgot Bethel: Nor will a child of God ever forget the spot in the valley of Achor, where Jesus first whispered his proposals of love upon his broken heart. From that moment, he thought The Gospel Cottage Lecturer, No. 48.

of standing in the Lord's presence, provided he could see Him as he caught a glimpse of Him then, does not terrify him. Why? not as an angry judge did he meet him, but with love and mercy sweetly beaming on his brow.

Uniformity in happiness is not to be had here. But Paul had attained to a state of spiritual experience, in which he was uniformly contented. "I have learned," says the Apostle, "in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." And I verily believe Paul arrived at this most enviable point by a path such as that we have been going over in our two previous lectures. He was led on step by step in his experience, until, being confirmed in his GOOD HOPE, he could JOY IN GOD!

The morning after the Prodigal's return, he was not alarmed at meeting his father! no, But rather with what pleasureable longings, did he wait, that he might greet with joy and gratitude his benefactor and his friend in the person of his tender father! why should it be otherwise with thee, dear little-faith? Hast thou not had many tokens of his favour? Dost thou not know somewhat of the Prodigal's gracious reception? If so, there is nothing but thine own short views of things to prevent thee from taking up the Apostle's words, and saying, "Not only so, but we also Joy in God!"

The word joy here seems to convey the idea of a feeling of pleasure, or happiness; but it does not follow, that such was the intention of the Apostle. The word rendered joy, is the same as in the 3rd verse, is rendered "glory;" and again, the same as in chapter 2, verse 17, is rendered "boast," and signifies to exult, boast, or glory in that to which reference is made. In this case Paul was brought to exult, glory, or boast in his God, by what the Lord the Spirit had revealed of Him unto his faith. The apostle's was therefore the Joy of faith, as distinguished from that "joy unspeakable, and fulness of glory which is experienced in immediate communion. David says, "My meditation of Him shall be sweet;" but when do we meditate upon one very dear to us? Is it not in their absence? It is then we sit down, and call to mind all that we have seen or heard, that is dear to us in word or deed; it is then we brood over their letters of love, and take pleasure in contemplating their image, which sincere affection has engraved upon our hearts. So Paul here, since the love of God had been shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, which was given unto him; he could sit down and contemplate Jehovah in his Trinity of Persons, as his glory, his exultation, his boast, and his eternal joy. Yes, and the more he knew of Jehovah, the higher did his thoughts and exultations rise, although at the moment he may not be in the enjoyment of a sweet frame, or comfortable sensation.

Come then, my brother! "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and He is truly on your side, if you have known a single Bethel moment. He changes not! He never laid his hand upon a poor sinner yet, and in so doing spoiled the world to him, and him for the world, without having first given him an eternal interest in Himself, his being, and his love.

It was however the developement in Paul's experience of this interest, which caused him to exult in his God; with this, therefore, we must begin. And he gives us the channel through which the power of the mercy flowed to him in these words, "Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the ATONEMENT." All the blessedness turns upon the two words marking the time spoken of—"now;" and the mercy revealed—"the atonement." We will look at the last first.

In the margin, instead of "the atonement," the word is rendered "the reconciliation," and some commentators express their surprise that our translators used the word atonement at all; but this surprise will vanish, if the precious word be taken in its true and simple sense, according to its old English origin; then it will be seen to contain in it all that is blessed in "reconciliation," and something more, namely Union! upon the ground of which Paul delighted to go forth Joying in God. The word atonement, does not signify here, merely the ransom price or sacrifice, as it does in many places in the Old Testament; but it contains in its signification an expression of that unalterable condition of blessedness, to which the child of God is raised in his new creatureship, in, or through Christ Jesus.

I shall not easily forget the glorious power which rested upon this precious word, when, for the first time the Holy Comforter spelled out its true form and meaning in my heart thus—

AT-ONE-MENT!

and this gives the true sense of the word as it was formerly in use in our language.

Behold, my brother, how great is thy blessedness, even now—in this time-state—in the midst of all thy tossings and exercises, thou art eternally, unchangeably, AT ONE with thy God and Father in Christ. And thus it reads in all its mysterious fulness and divine blessedness, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect IN ONE!" (John xvii. 23.)

Moreover, I beg you to observe with me, that without some ap-

prehension of this soul-establishing truth, it is impossible, according to the nature of things, for a sinner to "Joy in God."

When contemplating Jehovah, we cannot lose sight of his attributes. We first meet his infinity, his eternity, his unchangeability! then we contemplate in this light, his power, his wisdom, his knowledge, his holiness, his faithfulness! connected with which we perceive the solemn nature of his hatred, his wrath, his vengeance! How tremendous are these overwhelming realities, to a spiritually living child of God?

But here, dear little-faith, we pray the Holy Comforter to drop his precious "Be of good cheer," into thy trembling soul. There are other attributes besides these with which thou hast to do. There are his love, his grace, his kindness, his mercy, and his patience! all to be viewed in the light of his infinity, eternity, and immutability!

Yes, and all engaged on thy behalf.

What is it that makes a little child walk with a light step, and without a care through dismal or unknown paths on a dark and cloudy night, while it feels its little hand firmly locked in its father's grasp? Terrible forms may present themselves, the wail of the night bird may come screaming through the dimly seen arches of the mouldering ruin, while the little one walks fearlessly over the graves of the dead. By himself he could not venture near that solemn place in the dark watches of the night; but by his father's side, his only feeling is that of security, because he has confidence in his father's wisdom, power, and love. Paul had become this little child! He felt the paternal grasp! He knew that he was a child of God-a "man in Christ;" and that therefore whatever his Father was, in all the infinite greatness, glory, and majesty of his divine essence; now that he was a heaven-born, eternally-living new creature in Christ Jesus, his Father was all that on his behalf, for his everlasting good and blessedness!

A prowling wolf might see the little child, and howl with rage, because he dare not venture to seize him as his prey. Should the howl of the wolf frighten the child? No, but rather cause him to smile with complacency upon his poor, pitiful, hungry foe, as he looks him in the face, point upwards with his little finger to the strong arm and the stern brow of his father! No, dear little-faith! There is nothing to terrify thee in that flash of fiery indignation which lights up thy Father's solemn countenance, his sympathies, and attributes, immeasurably great and wonderful as they be, are engaged on thy behalf! and not for time alone, but for eternity. It is thine enemies shall feel the weight of that inflexible hatred,

wrath, and vengeance. Whatever was due to thee, for all the sins and rebellions to which thou hast been, and still art, the subject, was summed up in one grand total, and was poured into the cup of torments which thy all-glorious Christ drank on thy behalf, when "the chastisement of thy peace was upon Him!" What remains of vengeance in the heart of Jehovah is thy protection! Every attribute now is engaged on thy behalf to work thee eternal

good, and to fill thee with eternal Joy.

Paul had been taught all this. Paul had not only been reduced to the condition of a little child at conversion, according to the testimony of Jesus, as it is written, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" but he had also, by the teaching of the Spirit, been brought to live, at all times, the same nothing, little child as he was the first moment he began to desire the sincere milk of the word. And it was as such, according to his own rule laid down, Coloss. ii. 6, he walked in Christ Jesus Joying in God! "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk we in him." We receive Christ as little helpless tabes; we must therefore learn to walk in him as such! Then as we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, we shall, by degrees discover, that the unchanging object of our boast and joy even now, in this time state of our existence, is the infinity, the eternity, the immutability of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in every attribute and perfection: for since we are eternally AT ONE with Jehovah in Christ. He has become to us our own unchangeable God of peace! God of all grace! God of providence, and God of all comfort. And therefore, terrible as He is in his majesty, He is our holy Comforter. Oh my brother, from low views of this most glorious subject, our Union-AT-ONE-MENT—in Jesus, with God our Father and the Eternal Spirit: how do we live, daily dishonouring our God, and slighting our high privileges, as we are carping and caring about the daily cross, the bubbles of time, and all that belongs to the world, the flesh, and the Devil; as though if managed better, our condition would be bettered! whereas nothing can happen to us but those things which are folded up, according to the dictates of infinite wisdom and love, in that glorious covenant which is ordered in ALL THINGS and sure, AND this is why, whatever comes to pass, however bitter in itself, it may be, it must of necessity work for our good.

Yes, say you, I know this is all true, but here arises again the old difficulty. This is only blessed to those who have RECEIVED

the atonement.

I must then, my brother, lead you back again to the Prodigal and to Paul with his thorn. I have shown you again and again, that to have fellowship with these in their FEELING OF NEED, and in their BITTERNESS OF SOUL on account of their condition, is to be IN LIFE! which is to be IN CHRIST! which is to be IN GOD! Then, this one point settled, that we have now received this most wonderful of all blessings, ETERNAL LIFE; and I appeal to you, my poor doubting brother, dare you affirm in the presence of God that you are dead in trespasses and sins? You dare not, you feel a LIVING, INSATIABLE DESIRE after a true knowledge of Christ as your own precious Saviour, which you could not feel if dead in sin !--Then—I repeat—this one point settled, that you have this spiritual LIVING FEELING, ve have now received the atonement; and henceforth, whether you can realize it or not, God himself in all his boundless majesty becomes the object of your exultation, your boast, your glory, and your joy! You are AT ONE with Him in his infinity, eternity, and immutability! AT ONE with Him, thus, in his power; therefore you shall be more than conquerors! AT ONE with Him, thus, in his wisdom; therefore, the counsel of every Ahithophel shall be turned into foolishness! AT ONE with Him, thus, in his knowledge, therefore nothing can happen in time, or eternity, which has not already past in review, and been provided against; so that thine inheritance cannot be marred! AT ONE with Him, thus, in his holiness; so that when thou art judged, it shall be as thou standest in Union with Christ IN God, "The righteousness of God in Him! My brother, sin may be sought for as we thus stated, but there shall be none! Be this thy boast and thy Joy !- AT ONE with Him, thus, in his faithfulness: therefore, though we believe not, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself; and thou art Himself, as thou art thus joined to Jesus, "Bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh!" Yes, and AT ONE with Him in his hatred, vengeance, and wrath! Dost thou not know and feel daily, as far as thy little powers are capable of containing it, a measure of the same holy indignation against sin and all connected with Jehovah's hatred has but one object, namely, sin! As a new creature, partaking of the divine nature, thou art AT ONE with Him in this also. Sin is the only thing the new-man hates. It is sin which causes the new-creature to hate the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

But we stop not here. Turn again, my dear brother. Behold! Thou art AT-ONE with Jehovah in his infinite, eternal, unchangeable love! AT ONE with Him in all the boundless fulness of his grace!

AT ONE with Him in all the flowings of the compassionate loving kindnesses of his paternal heart! AT ONE with Him in all the unsearchable riches of his tenderest mercy! and therefore, since he knows thy frame, and ever remembers that thou art but dust; thou art AT-ONE with Him in the unwavering, undisturbed, long-suffering, unprovokeable flowings of his divine patience, on the unruffled bosom of which thou mayest repose, while tempests of impatience may rage in thine own flesh! still here shalt thou listen to the unvarying answer to all thy petulent questions about how far thy patience with thy brethren shall extend, "I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN!" Oh my poor tempesttossed, impatient brother! The Holy comforter bring up your sorrowing heart to-day, to a sweet apprehension of your eternal AT-ONE-MENT with your God and Father, thus, in all that He is, in the glory of his attributes and perfections! that He may become the alone object of your Joy.

But now, let us once more look at the SUBJECT of Paul's Joy. The object being Jehovah himself, the subject is pointed out by the all-important word IN!

Mark, my brother, all thy blessedness, and all thy comfort too, turns upon this simple point. Thou mayest have all the ornamental piety that ever adorned a Pharisee, and yet our of Christ it can avail thee nothing. Thou mayest have all gifts, in prayer, in utterance, in zeal, in memory, in benevolence, yea, "all knowledge! all faith!" all confidence; yet out of Christ, thou art nothing but a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." I tell you my brother, and companion in the tribulation, which belongs to spiritual life, I am beginning to prize the every day feeling of need, the hourly hungering and thirsting after the bread and water of life, the constant waiting, hoping, desiring, and watching frame of soul of which I am the continual subject, in one sense, above the transient moments of joy which crown my days and nights of sorrow and watching. Not that I love these precious droppings of the dew of heaven the less; but I know by the sensations of keen hunger and spiritual longing, which I have, that my soul is in vigorous spiritual health. It seems a great thing to say, perhaps, and I confess my pen almost falters while I write it; nevertheless, I cannot give up this point, as health and hunger go together naturally, so do they spiritually. Moreover, the stronger the appetite, the more simple the food that will satisfy it. What is it, my brother, that is the daily substance of thy cry at the Throne of mercy? It does not regard the outward tinsel, or the pampering delicacies of the scientific professor.

or the rich man's table; but the poor in Spirit concentrates the whole of his desire in a single word, and cries for Bread! Bread! "Give us this day our daily bread!" What is it? "Jesus only!" The bread of life! the children's bread, for a living child. But why do I now so highly prize my sensations of hunger? because the Lord the Spirit has taught me the eternal importance of that which is the cause of hunger! because the Holy Comforter has shown me that out of Christ there is no spiritual life, therefore no spiritual needs; so that if I have these things, they are my tokens, that I am "IN God the Father, and IN the Lord Jesus Christ," (2 Thess. i. 1). But I cannot be IN Jehovah thus, without having received the AT-ONE-MENT! and this is to stand in eternal life and union. above the reach of time-things, in the person of our most glorious Christ. Therefore, we boast not of strong faith, we boast not of the amount of our enjoyments, we boast not in the extent of our knowledge, we boast not of the absence of the thorn; but we boast, we exult, we glory, we joy in our LIVING NEEDS, because they prove to us beyond a doubt, that we are passed from death spiritual into life eternal: and thus we live, though sorrowful, yet always rejoicing in this life. as having nothing, yet possessing all things!

My brother! It is a life which cannot be lost:—it is eternal!

Far, far above all thy comforts and joys, as one sings,

"Eternal life! Lord, what is this?

'Tis more than heaven, tis more than bliss!

Eternal life! 'Tis this I see,

'Tis "I in them and thou in me!"

Nor is there danger here of stopping short of the "Fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." Hunger presses forward towards the banquetting house! And true love kindled in the soul, and manifested in desire, can never be satisfied until it meets a full return.

" Now unto him," &c.

THE BRUISED REED!

(No. 1.)

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."—Matt. xii. 20.

How full of difficulty are the first steps of true living faith! Yet how simple! Indeed, it is the simplicity of faith that makes its first movements appear so difficult; since, it is not so much the positive actings of faith that constitute the difficulty, but it is rather the contrary working of unbelief in the mind, which is ever doubting the genuineness of those simple acts of faith which are wrought in the heart by the power and ministry of the Holy Comforter, the moment we are truly born of God. Observe, my brother. The first feeble desires which struggled their way upwards through that mass of confusion, which filled thy stricken heart, when first the light of life began to shine in thy soul; were they sinful desires? No! The holy fear of the Lord was in those desires? What then follows?—I pray the Holy Comforter to unlock the sweet truth in its simplicity to your trembling heart-" Whatsoever is not of faith is sin!" But there can be no sin in those desires which arise from the direct inspiration of the Spirit, therefore, these very desires partook of the nature of true faith.

"Who hath believed our report," exclaims the wondering prophet, as he beholds the glorious Messiah "despised and rejected of men." But here was positive unbelief. We are too apt to apply these words to the doubting and fearing ones, who are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, but who's difficulty is to believe that they are believers. The rejectors of Christ, both among the Jews, and in our own day among mere natural professors, are, to use the language of the Apostle as given to us in the marginal reading (Romans xi. 32,) "Altogether shut up in unbelief." But this is a totally different state to that which the Lord's beloved "little-faiths" find themselves struggling through from day to day. As The Gospel Cottage Lecture, No. 49.

spiritual life is the PCWER of faith—and Christ personally is that life, and therefore the Author, and Finisher of our faith; so spiritual death is the POWER of unbelief. But it is spiritual life in the child of God that enables him to feel the working of unbelief; which manifests in us the grand distinction between being shut up under the power of unbelief, and having to cry daily, on account of the frailty of faith's trembling power, "Lord, INCREASE our faith.

Let us, however, pause a moment and look at the question in another point of view. Here are two distinct operations, which are plainly discoverable in the child of God, both of which are properly called faith. Here is first the faith that leads up the soul in desire after Christ, and here is, secondly, the faith which lays hold upon Christ. One we may call a "coming faith," the other the faith of assurance. To get at the second, without knowing something of the first, is impossible; although in our day of wide profession, much that passes for assurance, if weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, must be pronounced to be of that kind of dead faith which is opposed to that which is found by coming at the door; since it is obtained by climbing up some other way!

Oh, my brother, what a blessed thing it is to have begun as one of God's "little-faith's," and to have been squeezed in at the strait gate, although at the expense of every rag of our own fancied righteousness! Yes, it is too narrow a way for any to pass through but naked, nothing, empty, feelingly condemned sinners! many of the Lord's little-faith's long wonder why they cannot press through, who afterwards learn that the bruising of the reed is necessary, to counteract the expansive power of the pride of free-will, before they can enter in at the door.

Many professors believe that they are believers, who are yet dead in their sins; never having known truly the power of that inward life, which is the fountain of all true and living faith. While on the other hand, many who are true believers, and who daily experience the actings of that divine faith which worketh by love, cannot persuade themselves to believe their's is a "saving faith."

Where shall we look for a solution of the mystery of this working of unbelief, which still so far prevails in God's children? Even to the words of Jesus himself." "Blessed art thou Simon, Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

The word of God is full of precious testimonies respecting our most glorious Christ; proclaiming Him as the eternal life, and salvation of His body, the Church, and setting Him forth in all His

suitability to the daily needs of His people. Then, side by side with these testimonies are a thousand varied, sweet, and simple metaphors, living pictures, and definitions of character, describing the every day experience of a truly living member of that one Church. And yet, although these things are made so plain, and so blessedly simple, who are they which are found continually smiting upon their breasts, wringing their hands in dismay and anguish of heart, and weeping bitter tears in secret before God; because, while they see and believe fully in the eternal, inestimable importance, and blessedness of an interest in Christ, and salvation in Him, they cannot believe, with a satisfying conviction, that they themselves are truly in possession of that Pearl of great price? Are they not the very persons who are pointed out in God's holy word by those various, simple characteristics and features, which form the chief evidences of the existence in them of true spiritual life? Why then will they not believe, and be happy? say some who are established in their own interest and security in eternal union with, and completeness in Do not chide dear little-faith my elder brother! Be not harsh and full of rebukes! You say, you grieve to see them living so low down the holy ladder of spiritual enjoyment! You long to see them mount up as upon eagle's wings? Well, be it so. But despise not the day of small things. None desire their spiritual elevation so intensely as themselves! But they are made honest by the grace given unto them. God has made them so! They dare not reckon upon anything as their own, until they know, without a scruple, by personal revelation, that it is verily theirs by free gift. God has made them truly meek, and a sense of their own depravity keeps them truly humble. So that they dare not walk boldly into the royal halls of the glorious King of kings, on a general invitation, but they are constrained to wait, with many an anxious pang of doubt, at the hallowed posts of His golden doors, until the Holy Comforter himself comes with a direct message from the throne, and gently leading the trembling one by the hand, softly whispers the long desired "Come in! thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without!" Once brought to this precious point, littlefaith knows something personally about the wedding garment, and the banquetting house; nor will he soon forget it, but thenceforth the remembrance of the power of that blessed moment causes him continually to cry out, Oh, come again! until, however, he has been feelingly brought there, all the reasoning in the world could not induce him to say "He brought ME into the banquetting-house

and his banner over me was love." Or "I know that my Redeemer liveth!"

An ordinary traveller would account forty days a long time to occupy in a journey between Egypt and Jericho; but who on this account would chide the Israelites of old, for continuing forty long years in the wilderness? It was the Lord's leading then; it is the Lord's leading still. The best conclusion we can come to, is to sum up all by saying, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." Man works by reason. God works by the power of his grace. We see the security of these doubting ones so plainly, that we are often constrained to say to them, as our blessed Lord said to his disciples "How is it that ye do not yet understand?" However, the secret is here, and will appear clearest by contrast.

Christ said to Peter, "Flesh-and-blood hath not revealed this unto thee." Now, flesh-and-blood revelations, wrought in the natural mind, will only satisfy flesh-and-blood professors, who are content with an intellectual religion. These find no difficulty in taking all for granted. As soon as their natural minds discover or are attracted by the external beauties of the Gospel-and these external attractions shine above the brightness of the sun; they with joy embrace the system, and sit down at ease in a supposed faith; thenceforth finding an abundance of satisfaction in their ever-active zeal in schooling others into the acquirement of the same "flesh and blood" system of mere intellectual, and sentimental religion. Pressing at the strait gate, striving to enter in with a broken heart, crushed under a sense of bitter sin, are not among their first lines of teaching. Their reason comprehends the Gospel scheme, according to the modernized formularies, made to please the fleshly mind; their natural good taste opens to the beautiful moral tendency of the Gospel-merely considered in its outward effects: their self-respect is flattered under its influences; their natural fear of death soothed by the hopes held out by it; and their consciences quieted by a survey of its effects on their inclinations and benevolence; all of which they suppose to constitute a change of heart! This may, and does make a good citizen; but, after all that may be said in commendation of it, is it more than NATURAL RELIGION? Is it not manifest that all this may be attained by the unaided efforts of reason? Mark, my reader, and may the Lord the Spirit fix it upon thy conscience!

To whatever point in religious attainment a man may carry himself, or another, without the direct operation of the Spirit of God, must be characterized as yet within the bounds of NATURAL RELIGION!

which has nothing of salvation in it, however pleasing and flattering in its appearances. It is a solemn enquiry to come to! What is my position? am I under the teaching of the Holy Spirit? May not a strict, large-hearted Romanist, or Unitarian, reach my standard of piety, differing only in creed?

To the man who has never heard, with the living ear of faith, a precious Jesus speaking as the good Shepherd to his sheep; or who with the living eye of faith, has never beheld Him in all his beauty and glory. Solomon's sacred song must be a blank; the person of Christ cannot be the all and in all to the desire of such an one: the eternal union of the glorious Head with His one body the Church, whence flows to it all its blessedness, is a subject full of stumbling stones, and is as a rock of offence to such a man, because it involves certain doctrines which strike at the root of his flesh-pleasing system. But now contrast with this mere naturalist in religion, the truly living spiritual seekers of Jesus! These have heard of Him by the hearing of the spiritual ear, and they feel their daily growing need of that pardon, mercy, love, and favour, which alone flows from a personal, spiritual seeing of Jesus by the eye of faith; therefore are these waiting, crying, hoping, desiring, and saying with heart-felt emphasis, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" Whether at the Throne of grace, in reading the precious word, or in the ordinances of God's house, their constant cry is, "Sirs! we would see Jesus!" Nor will they, can they settle down into sweet peace and rest in Jesus until, by the ministry of the Holy Comforter, such a revelation of Jesus is made in their hearts as shall include in it, not only a knowledge of the blessedness and suitability of Christ, and his precious salvation, to their peculiar and deeply felt circumstances, but also the equally blessed, and soul establishing knowledge of their exact suitability in all their felt destitution to that most precious Saviour, and to His glorious and complete salva-My brother! when the dear Comforter shall have clearly tion. opened this truth to your renewed mind, you will be able to understand the apostle's meaning, somewhat fully, where he says "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

How so? Because, discover what we may now, the language of everything runs thus, "Go to the fountain!" "Fly to the pardon office." "Look to Jesus." Cast all your care upon Jesus." "Refuge in Jesus." "Remember the fulness of Jesus." "You have righteousness, wisdom, life, and strength in Jesus." "You are what you are, that you may prize a precious Jesus!" "There is

no rest or peace out of Jesus." It is true my brother! nothing can happen to you as a new creature in Christ, that can make you otherwise than suitable to Him! Yea, more, whatever thy condition may be in thy feeling of need, the whole of it comes upon thee, and is developed in thee, that thou mayest be brought to draw all thy supplies from Jesus only. I know this very simple, child-like way of living upon an ever-present, ever-needed Christ, is very little known, especially in the day in which we are living. Nor do I profess to have grown down so little in self, as to have grown up thus into Jesus Christ my living Head in ALL THINGS. But this I do, I daily perceive that this is my only abiding blessedness, and more and more find that those very things which I am prone to look upon as my saddest crosses, are the very things that bring me day by day, with my mouth in the dust, to an earnest position of longing after, yet patient, waiting for Christ. Longing for Him, because death and misery is stamped upon all but that which flows from His unutterably glorious and adorable self; and patient waiting, because of the felt greatness of His loving-kindness, the depth of His compassion, and the wonderful condescension of His grace, that He should open communion with, and shine in all the rich lustre of His personal glory, in the heart of one so totally vile.

But here let little-faith observe. All this is not necessary as if it could add to the ever unchangeable security of even the feeblest members of the body of Christ; but rather that they may live in the knowledge and enjoyment by faith, of that eternal and unalterable blessedness, which was made manifest as belonging to them, in that memorable moment in their time-existence, when spiritual life entered their souls. Then they became believers in the record which God has given of His Son; but it is by this after-revelation that they are made to see Jesus as their own sweet Saviour; and it is this glorious sight of Him that so overcomes their unbelief, that, like Thomas when HE SAW, they cry out, MY Lord and MY God! It is hence clear, that they are believers in Christ before they are brought out into the full liberty of the Gospel, and as believers they are as safe as they can be, for the promises of the glorious Gospel are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, not to those only who ENJOY a knowledge of their interest in Him, but to those emphatically who To which we may also add a word which the Lord's own living ones shall find to be true through all their chequered pathway, "He that believeth SHALL NOT MAKE HASTE." Poor little faith feels his galling bondage, groans being burdened every hour, longs for the Jubilee trumpet to drown by its joyous strains the

deep murmur of the thunder and the voice of words. Hope constantly goes out and plucks an olive leaf which tells of a peace accomplished, of a deluge eternally dried up, and of a day of release at hand! But "The captive exile HASTENETH that he may be loosed!" It is not so, my brother? And yet you cannot get out! If for a few moments the heart is melted under a blessed sense of His UNSEEN PRESENCE, as He putteth in his precious hand by the hole of the door! You rise up in an instant to open to your Beloved! A whisper is heard in the soul, "The master is come and calleth for thee." You hear his all powerful voice! you feel for the moment He speaks to you! the response of the soul goes out, "It is the voice of my beloved!" The longed-for moment is come! The captive exile rises in haste! "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed [or WENT OUT, WENT FORTH] when he spake; I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." Oh sad disappointment! How does the heart sicken at the thought that the dark walls of the prison-house must still enclose us. Ah, my brother! "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" indeed! Yet eternal praises to our glorious Jesus. There is not a person upon earth whose eve shall read, or whose ear shall listen to these words. who knows what these goings forth of the soul after an expected, longed for Christ, mean, in the living experience of the same, but that soul has passed out of spiritual death into eternal life, and by the outgoings and upgoings of soul after a confirming faith's view of Jesus, are manifested to be living members of His glorious body, of His flesh, and of His bone. Hope tells thee the truth at this moment, dear little-faith! The desire that fills thy heart with emotion arises from the love of God shed abroad there in thy little measure. by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven! and that which turns aside from all other objects, and cries out,

"Give me Christ, or else I die,"

is living faith, going forth and laying hold upon His divine person! Thy hope shall never make thee ashamed, (Rom. v. 5.) Thy desire shall come, and be to thee a tree of life, of which thou shalt eat and live for ever! Thy little faith cannot fail, for its Author has said "I have prayed for thee!" Therefore, even in thy case, tempest-tossed, and not fully comforted as thou mayest be, my brother! that precious word is fulfilled. "Now abideth, faith, hope, love, these three," and abide they must, since "He that hath wrought

[formed or created] us for that very thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." What is the earnest? the word signifies a pledge, pawn, or hostage, but in modern language "a deposit," a part of an agreed sum. Now look at it, thou fearful hearted one. Hast thou received the first penny?

"These feeble desires, these wishes so weak!
"Tis Jesus inspires!"

you feel that you cannot do without Christ! But He is so glorious and you so vile, that you fear to presume! Eternal praises! "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but our Father which is in heaven!"

Since then it is as much the work of the Spirit to bring a child of God into the liberty of the Gospel, as it is to convey the first spark of divine life into the soul, how are we to deal with the Lord's bruised reeds? Jesus says he will not break them! Shall me chide them, as though they had power to bind themselves up, or make themselves whole? No, rather lift up Christ; "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto me." But it is Christ IN YOU the hope of glory, by the work and ministry of the Holy Comforter, as well as Christ exalted at the right hand of the majesty on high. national Christ! But He who was born in Bethlehem, born in our hearts. It is a mistake to talk to little-faith about what they ought to do. For it is the Holy Spirit that worketh in them, TO WILL and TO DO of His own good pleasure. Our province then is, in lifting up Christ, to point out THE SCRIPTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S BRUISED REEDS-THE TENDENCY OF THESE CHARACTER-ISTICS to depress the heart, especially under the influence of Satan's devices-The SUITABILITY OF CHRIST, and all the yea and amen promises in Him to such—The certain issue, after every stage in the bruising, in deliverance—THE GLORY OF God the end of all-THE BRUISED REED IN THE HAND OF CHRIST! "And this will we do if God permit."

In the mean time, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

THE BRUISED REED.

(No. 2.)

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgmens unto victory."—Matt. xii. 20.

THE book of Psalms and the book of the prophecies of Isaiah, will ever be read with peculiar comfort by the Lord's exercised children, because, in these precious books we have so clearly portrayed the Person, obedience, sufferings, and suitability of our great Redeemer, on the one hand; while by the side of these divine pictures are drawn with equally minute attention to detail, the precise characteristics of those who are interested in all the blessings and fulness of grace that are treasured up in him.

I know it is objected by many, that to dwell upon the characteristics which are the peculiar marks by which God's children are known; or, in other words, to preach or write about the daily experience of the living spiritual family of Jesus, is not to preach But I must object in my turn to such a statement. Since there can be no separation between Head and members, and since the Church as she is made up of many members in one body, as it is written, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so ALSO IS CHRIST," (1 Col. xii. 12.) It follows, that whatever is the daily experience of the Church in the wilderness, is the experience of the body of Christ; and therefore, if we would preach A WHOLE CHRIST, we must preach, not only about THE HEAD, but about THE MEMBERS also. But then it is necessary to guard against extremes here, in what is called *corruption preaching*. Corruption belongs to "the old man who is corrupt," and will ever remain so. The old nature in a child of God is full of sin, just like the nature of every unregenerate man, so that the fact of our being black, hell-deserving sinners, can be no evidence of our spiritual childship; with this, in the abstract, we have nothing to do in speaking of the "bruised reed" and the "smoking flax." Paul did not glory in the greatness of his sin, when he claimed to be the chief of sinners, but rather in the great debt of love he owed, and the great sum of glory which THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 50.

would arise to the grace of Jehovah manifested in the salvation of such an one in the Person of Christ. It is a mistake to call the workings of corruption in the Adam-nature of a child of God, "his experience," since a man dead in sin has the same. But the true experience of a "man in Christ," is to be found and traced in the every day effects and workings of SPIRITUAL LIFE within him. That is thy experience, my brother, which arises from having "Christ formed in you," (Gal. iv. 19), which produces both sorrow and joy. And this, not at the commencement of thy Pilgrim journey only, but thou shalt find it the same alternation of joy and sorrow—the bruising of the reed and the binding it up, the smouldering of the embers and the mounting of the flame, until thou shalt follow thy Fore-runner over the Jordan, and leave thy wilderness experience behind thee for ever.

That which I am most desirous, if the Lord will, to fix upon the minds of the Lord's little faith is, that it is their knowledge of their sinnership, and the effects of this knowledge, which proves them to be among God's bruised reeds; moreover, that to be one of these bruised reeds, is to be a new creature in Christ Jesus; and therefore, that every atom of suffering they endure is suffering WITH CHRIST: as members of his body. And then the blessedness that goes with this state of things, namely, that each peculiar branch of experience as it is developed in the soul, has its corresponding "precious promise," laid up in the Holy word as a suitable consolation. that, as surely as we can trace the features of the living child in our daily exercises, so surely have we a right to the blessed fruit of the tree of promise, which is no less than the tree of life; "for all the promises of God are in Christ, yea, and in Him, amen." Whose leaves heal every bruise, and whose love shed abroad, causes the smoking flax to mount up into a heavenly flame.

One precious little chapter—the thirty-fifth of Isaiah—while it opens up the characteristics of such, sweetly preaches Christ to every "bruised reed;" and each sentence is a clear answer to the every day complaints of these bruised ones, who are ever pouring out their hearts before the Lord. Go over the chapter, my brother, and say, does it not contain thy portrait, and a true sketch of the chequered landscape, over which thy pilgrim path is winding day by day? and are not the sweet promises it contains those very things after which thy soul is breathing continually?

The chapter opens with a glorious promise to cheer every cast down and needy heart! But who is the Speaker? and what are the circumstances under which he speaks? "It is the voice of my Beloved!" says the Church. It is the voice of the good Shepherd as he looks round with all tenderness and compassion upon his scattered sheep! It is the voice of Jesus as he draws near and comes into His garden. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse!" Yea, it is the voice of the good Physician as he softly walks into the chamber of suffering, as He comes down into the valley of Achor—the valley of trouble—to visit his "bruised reeds."

Ah, could we but measure the fulness of His heart as he opens his gracious mouth in words of consolation to his little faiths, with what simple confidence would it inspire us all, my brother! Could we but fully comprehend his Person, could we but fix our thoughts upon, and realize his infinite fulness of those three great and glorious properties, which will make Him everlastingly suitable and precious to his glorified Church, namely, Infinite love, Infinite wisdom, and Infinite power; how, as simple little children, should we cast all our care upon him; delighting in the thought, that all his vast care, in the government and upholding of the mighty frame-work of the universe itself—glorious as it is—is not to be compared with his ever constant tenderness and watchfulness over the feeblest lambs in his fold.

Come then, my troubled brother, let us turn aside for a season and observe our glorious Physician, and listen to his dear words, as he cometh down in the love of his heart to make the beds of his dear ones in their affliction, and to visit them with his salvation. Behold him! as He enters morning by morning this hospital of suffering and sickness—this lower house of his—as he passes from ward to ward, and as he beholds the sorrowful faces of his suffering anxious family turned towards him, imploringly craving his help. Thus, taking a general survey as he enters, he begins with the first words of this sweet chapter (Isaiah xxxv)., "That wilderness soul, that sorrowful heart, that desolate spirit, shall rejoice yet, through the sweet anointings of the oil of joy, above all its mourning, and above all its sorrow, and shall yet blossom in eternal spring, with all the radient beauty of the rose of Sharon; yea, abundantly shall its sweet blossoms spring forth to my glory, although now, diseased, lamenting, and forlorn; yet with joy and singing shall it come forth out of this prison-house. Yes, and although now the little helpless thing seems to be less than "The hyssop which springeth out of the wall," a few hours, and the night of adversity shall give place to the day of prosperity and triumphs, in which it shall "rejoice even with joy and singing," and the glory of stately, majestic Lebanon shall

be given unto it, the excellent beauty of lovely Carmel, and the gushing fatness of fruitful Sharon! Then shall the dim eye of little faith behold the glorious covenant designs of the Lord Jehovah, and the excellency of the perfect redemption-work of his great God and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Now mark how tenderly He maketh the several beds of his bruised ones in their affliction. The Lord help thee to see as we pass round the sick wards with our great and glorious Physician, and watch the developments of his skill and care, that it matters not what the peculiar nature of thy infirmity may be, whatever crushes thy heart, thatlike Paul's thorn—is the bruises to the reed! Satan will endeavour to persuade thee that thou hast no right to seek for thy characteristic in this calendar. That thy infirmity, impediment, temptation, cross, or easily besetting sin is of such a nature, as to shut thee out of the circle of his bruised ones. This is Satan's lie with which he has harassed the Lord's children in all ages. But what says our precious Lord Jesus? "ALL MANNER of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men" (Matt. xii. 31). What manner of sin is thine then, my brother, that it should unfit thee for Christ? It makes thee groan being burdened; it makes thee come with weeping and with supplication; it makes thee feel thyself to be the most needy creature in the wide world; as though there was not another so powerless as thyself! Fear not, my brother! "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: [to men of God] but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it;" and where is thy way of escape, my bruised brother? I know of but one! and that one—the Person, fulness, precious blood, and righteousness of my most glorious Christ? Thou mayest fail, like poor Peter. unchangeable way of escape never failed a broken-hearted sinner yet. And should I not find thee out as we pass on and view the scene of tender love which opens to us to day. The dear Physician knows the exact nature of thy case. And is there—can there be any thing too hard for the Lord.

"Strengthen ye the weak hands," (verse 3.) Behold, he comes to the first. "What bruiseth thee, poor little reed?" The dear

Physician listens to the complaint.

See, oh Lord, my hands are powerless; I lie in this solitary desert condition, knowing what I need, but unable to lay hold of the sweet promises which hang around, so as to lift myself up thereby, I strive and catch at them, and sometimes seem for a

few moments to have a firm grip upon them, but the moment I begin to rise, and my whole weight hangs upon it, my weak hands give way; the dear promise slips from my grasp, and I fall prostrate to the earth again.

I have a thousand petitions lying in my soul, but I cannot so lift up my hands in sweet prevailing prayer, as to feel that I pressed my petition to my Advocate, that he may plead it at the Throne. It is true my heart is full of desire, and I have a thousand complaints and enquiries registered, yet will my hands hang down, and refuse to do their office.

I see, too, the greatness of Thy vast salvation, I can trace in some degree the length and breadth and glory of it, and I would fain lay hold of it, and embrace it, and call it all my own; but the greater and the grander it appears in all its infinite dimensions, the more I look at my weak and drooping hands, and feel they are so small and feeble they could not grasp so large a blessing. It seems altogether too mighty for my little hands of faith—if hands of faith they be.

Dear bruised reed! He will not break thee! Go on, and pour out all thy sad complaint. All this to Him is as the acceptable smell of holy incense! He looks beneath the smoke that rises from the dimly burning wick of thy almost expiring lamp, and sees the living spark of fire of true love. Fear not! He would rather quench the brightest sun that shines in His universal empire, than annihilate that feeble spark!

But the Holy Comforter stands by! Him the great Physician rejoices in sending with healing leaves from the Tree of life. It is His glorious office, in which He delights, to fulfil which He is infinite in wisdom, love, and power. He is the Almighty Spirit, "The God of patience and consolation." Therefore, it is our mercy to know, that when Jesus beholds his needy ones in their weakness, and hears their complaints as they lift up their feeble voices to Him, He does not forget his gracious promise, "I will send you another Comforter." "I will not leave you orphans, I will come unto you." And as He beholds thy disappointment, my brother, owing to thy daily failures, in all thine efforts to keep fast hold upon Him, and His dear promises; how precious is it to read by faith His own mind in His own word, as He puts all his bruised reeds under the care and ministry of the Holy Comforter—for He alone can fulfil the divine charge—saying "Strengthen ye the weak hands!"

The word here rendered "Strengthen" is full of sweet teaching, and corresponds exactly to the characteristics as marking the ex-

perience of the "bruised reed and smoking flax" under the power of unbelief, which so weakens its strength of faith in THE WAY, as to disable poor little-faith for a season. It is the same word as in Genesis xxxii. 28, is rendered "prevailed;" "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." It signifies "To bind up and strengthen, so as to cause to HOLD FAST." Proverbs iv. 13, it is translated "Take fast hold;" "But signifieth," says a learned critic,* "to lay hold with strength, as men that are in peril of drowning, they will lay hold so fast upon a thing, that their hands may be sooner broken than loosed. Our language is not comprehensive enough to express the fulness of this word: the word implies A STRENGTH IN HOLDING, to hold a thing firmly, as it is used. Job ii. 3, "Still he holdeth fast his integrity." The word hath a further emphasis in it, it signifieth not only to hold a thing by what degree of strength wherewith we did formerly hold it, but it doth import thus much, to WAX STRONGER in the holding of it, to prevail or increase in strength."

Now, dear brother, here is the prescription of the good Physician on thy behalf. He says bind up the feeble hands of that poor littlefaith, and make them so strong that he may so grow in the precious grace of faith, as to lay hold upon me with an all-prevailing grasp: that he may no longer travel onward a poor Jacob—the heel grovelling in the dust; but may henceforth walk erect in his princely dignity, as "a man in Christ," who has power with God and with men—a prevailer! Then what follows? Art thou this needy bruised reed? Yea, does not the mention of the tender care of the Physician, cause the little spark to brighten in the flax so as almost to burst into a flame? Is there not a warm response in thy trembling bosom? What is it, but Hope! Divine and living Hope!

Yes, say you, I do feel I have a little hope! But why? cause I am just that bruised reed whose portrait you have painted. and feel the precious prescription is exactly what is suitable to mefor I can do nothing for myself—to have all done for and in me is exactly what I need.

Then come with me another step, my brother. Whence came this Hope? What is this Hope? It is a living, spiritual, aspiring But the time has been when you were "Without God and without HOPE in the world!" This cannot mean without the feeling of hope, for you had more of the feeling of hope then than you

^{*} Leigh's Critica Sacra, p. 71.

seem to have now, only then it was the hope of ignorance, which belongs to spiritual death. But now, it is—though a little, bashful, trembling thing, which shrinks from even the confession of its reality—a living hope! The Lord the Spirit make strong your weak hand of faith to-day, and enable you to lay hold upon your Hope! It is not a feeling, but A PERSON! That little spark of hope which is ever smouldering in thy soul cannot die out, because it is eternal! and CHRIST IS ALL!"

Dost thou know, my brother, what it is to cry out with the Prophet. "O the HOPE of Israel, and the SAVIOUR thereof in the time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? shouldest thou be as a man astonished for as Coverdale renders it. "a coward" as a mighty man [yet] that cannot save? Yet thou. O Jehovan, art in the MIDST OF US, and we are called by thy name! LEAVE US NOT!" (Jer. xiv. 8.) Where is thy hope! In heaven only? No. Eternal honours crown His sacred brow! He is in the midst of thee—thy Hope! "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, WITH HIM ALSO that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Is. lvii. 15.) But how does He manifest Himself as thus dwelling in thy contrite heart? Is it not as thy Hope? in that little hope, which though it be eternal life itself, even CHRIST FORMED IN YOUR HEART THE HOPE OF GLORY (Col. i. 27,) seems to thee as one "astonied," or "a coward," a trembling hope? Nevertheless, although it be but as a bruised reed now, and as the smoking flax, this Hope of Israel, this "Glorious Hope!" this "blessed Hope." (Titus ii. 13.) This "lively Hope," (1 Pet. i. 3,) will never make thee ashamed, for little as thou mayest think of thy Hope sometimes, it shall prove after all to be the unchangeable manifestations of the love of God to thee "shed abroad," or communicated unto thee, as that "well of living water springing up into everlasting life," by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," (Rom. v. 5).

But after all thy bruising, fears, and foreboding of evil, how suitable it is to thy condition, dear little-faith, to come with all thy needs to the great Physician, knowing that—

"His honour is engaged to save,

The meanest of his sheep;
All that His heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep."

And knowing moreover, not only that "His glory is great in thy salvation" but also that His love is as infinite as His glory is eternal! and that therefore thou hast a double hold upon His heart. Then mark the preciousness which arises to thee out of these considerations. It is not thy little hands that are concerned to bring about thine eternal success. And I know that thou art daily proving the truth of what I say. It is, my brother, a great, a grand, a glorious salvation! the more you know of it, the more impassibly blessed will it appear,

"That worms of earth should ever be, One with incarnate Deity."

Yet although its magnitude grows upon thee, so that thou art constantly finding thy feeble grasp too babe-like, it slips from thine The momentary comfort gathered from a firm grip, instantly dies away again, and it seems to have passed from thy grasp! yet trace the living truth in all its sweet developements! Does the great salvation let thee slip? Has it not become to thee the ever returning "one thing needful?" Does it not, the more you see its preciousness, yea, I would rather say, does HE not-for Christ is our salvation—does He not, the more you discover of His suitability, become increasingly desirable to thee? Has not the little that thou hast experienced in Hope, so entwined itself about thy heart, thy thoughts, thy affections, that it is ever softly drawing thy spirit up? As though, when earth, or sin, or any other power would hold thee, a gentle, constraining inward spiritual cord drew thee away? as though a soft whisper allured thee, and would not let thee settle at peace in any place, save that one, The bosom of eternal rest? What is it, my brother? Thou mayest let all slip together, according to thine own apprehension. But eternal love and faithfulness holds thee fast, and thus is it manifested in the Holv Comforter's repeated whispers, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Break thee, poor bruised reed! No. Himself hath wounded thee that He may make an opening, into which He may pour the balm of His unchanging love!

But we pause. In the mean time, His peace be with you. Amen.

THE BRUISED REED.

(No. 3.)

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."—Matt. xii. 20.

I know of nothing more difficult than to keep in the soul a sensible REALIZATION of the never-ceasing watchfulness and unvarying tender care, which our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ is at all times exercising towards the precious members of His mystical body. Yet what pains has He taken in the pages of His sweet word to comfort the troubled minds of his exercised and feelingly helpless dependents, by leaving them assurances, almost numberless, that He is always engaged on their behalf. Expressed too in such a variety of forms, that could we live more habitually in and upon the blessed word, we should be ever finding, that, into whatever circumstances we are brought by the guidings of divine providence, or by the permissions of that wisdom which cannot err, some "good words and comfortable words," spoken for the express purpose of conveying consolation and confident hope into the otherwise distracted mind, would tell us of a PRESENCE and a POWER, actuated by infinite compassion and tenderness, engaged with us, and for us, to overrule the otherwise ungovernable, to neutralize the poisonous, to disentangle the complicated perplexities which bewilder us, to make "the crooked straight and the rough places plain!"

I desire, however, my brother, in our present meditations especially to keep in view the constancy of this watchfulness and care over His dear family, which is exercised by our most glorious Christ. Remembering at every step, his eternal power and Godhead. That while he engages to carry us through, and to supply every need, be it great as it may, He is fully able. He has not The Gospel Cottage Lectures, No. 51.

out-promised Himself. My brother, it is thy special privilege to take thy stand daily upon this solid ground. Planting thy standard morning by morning, as thou art compelled, as a good soldier, to enter the battle-field, upon this immutable rock, "The eternal God is thy refuge!" Then, strengthening thyself in thy God-whatever thy foes or cares may be—thou hast a proclamation to read which well suits the beginning of a fierce onset. It is in the name of Him "that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." It is in the name of Him who delighteth to take poor little-faith by the hand on a bright night, when the heavens display the spangles which adorn the glorious robe of his majesty, and exhibit his power by which He has decked himself with majesty and excellency; and arrayed himself with glory and beauty! (Job xl. 10.) It is in the name of The Holy One, who while he points to the wide expanse whispers in thine ear, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, FOR THAT HE IS STRONG IN POWER, NOT ONE FAILETH!" Moreover. it is in the name of Him of whom blessed Paul declares, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth. visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist!" I confess, my brother, my soul is filled with astonishment at our folly, while I recur again and again to these glorious foundation truths, in the knowledge and belief of which we profess to him, that the little bubbles of time should take so firm a hold upon our minds; so that often for days together, the threatened explosion of one of these bubbles should fill the heart with as much dismay as though our eternal concerns depended upon the continuance of that which is but for a moment at best, and can no more affect our true blessedness, or our eternal interests, than the bursting of a bubble. which floats for a moment on the surface of the ocean, can affect the ebbing or the flowing of its constant tides! It is, however, in the name of this same Jehovah-Jesus, who to bring down his precious proclamation to the position and circumstances of the feeblest worm-Jacob in his family has asked the question, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my

hands." Or portrayed thee, sit is the same word as in Ezekiel iv. 1,) thy portraiture, my brother, in all thy sorrows and needs, is ever present with thy Holy One. It is impossible he can forget thee, or cease to care for and help thee, thy living image is portrayed upon . the same mighty hands which built and sustains all things; and upon the same tender heart, which, in its infinite love and compassion, rivals the tenderest care of the most devoted mother. then these two attributes of thy precious Jesus together, and triumphing in the blessedness of their union, and constant out-going on thy behalf, namely, His infinite love joined to His infinite power. to thy implacable enemy thy proclamation this morning as an answer to all the suggestions with which he has been tormenting thine afflicted mind on the approach of this fresh day of conflict, be it what it may. "But now," mark my brother, our blessings stand always thus, in the present tense! and again mark, thy precious proclamation is as an answer to whatever forebodings of evil may have been filling thy mind, or whatever bitter things thou mayest have been writing against thyself at the suggestions of the enemy. Yes, to all he may object, it is thy privilege to answer. "Bur now! thus saith Jehovan-Jesus that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not! for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers; they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shalt the flame kindle upon thee! For I am JEHOVAH-JESUS thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour." (Isa. xliii. 1, 3.)

Observe here, dear little-faith—and the Lord the Spirit give thee abiding comfort and confidence in the realization of the glorious mystery!—this precious proclamation stands in the name of Jehovah-Jesus! thine own brother! born in thine own nature! to be a suitable Saviour, Companion, and Helper in thine adversity! But you will object, it reads, "thus saith the Lord." True, but thus printed in small-capital letters, it points out to us that in the original Hebrew the name is Jehovah, since, however, the same divine person is also in the proclamation called the Holy One of Israel, and also the Saviour, it follows that this divine, essential name, points out to us the person of our most glorious Christ. Moreover to confirm this we read again in this same chapter, verse 11, "I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no Saviour." Here Christ himself is personally asserting his claim, by virtue of his self-existent essence, being one with the Father, to issue His divine

proclamations under His own sign-manuel—Jehovan-Jesus! King of kings and Lord of lords!

But now, my brother, we come to the precious marrow and fatness of this glorious truth in its REALIZATION by true spiritual experience. What was it that caused the heart of little Benjamin to leap for joy when he learned all the greatness, power, and dignity, to which Joseph was raised, as "Lord of all Egypt?" The naked fact was not enough to do it, for this he knew at a time when he would have gladly hurled him from his state and authority that he might have escaped out of his hands; so Satan knows all about the glory of Christ, but His power is Satan's torment. It was the REALIZATION of the dear relationship—"I am Joseph thy brother!" that caused Benjamin's heart to bound with delight as he beheld his own beloved elder brother standing in all the pomp and grandeur belonging to the proudest honours of the state which, the high and mighty Pharaoh was able to bestow. It was the one-ness in relationship and love that caused Benjamin to cling with pleasure and pride to the hand of him for protection, comfort, and supply, "without whom no man dare lift his hand or his foot in all Egypt." But what was the REALIZATIONS of Benjamin, my brother, compared to thine? What was he, poor little bruised reed? What art thou in all thy felt helplessness and needs, but another little Benjamin? The Lord help thee then to draw near and observe thy mighty One, as in all the majesty of His power, yet in all the tenderness of His heart, as thy great Physician, he comes again into the place where sin and sorrow causes thee to lie, that he may visit thee with His salvation! The Lord help thee to REALIZE the greatness of His Person, while thou art listening to the tenderness of His love.

Turning again to the sweet chapter mentioned in last lecture, (Is. xxxv. 3,) we meet another characteristic of the bruised reed, "confirm the feeble knees."

Behold again the gentle eye of the tender Physician, as he turns his attentive ear to this sad and helpless, bruised one, and listen to his pitiful complaint.

What ails thee, dear child?

Ah Lord, dost thou still own me as thy child? dost thou still remember mercy? I am that poor worm, who once, for a season, seemed to walk with thee! Yes, Lord, and I seemed to be increasing in my pace, so, that hope often whispered in my heart that I should soon begin to run with joy the blessed race! Instead of which, new scenes and new circumstances caught away my steps, and led my feet through giddy labyrinths. Here for a time I lost

my way, and blush to think, almost forgot my God! except in formal, outward, mock-devotion. And didst thou still, oh great Physician! remember me? Behold the wreck of what I was! The sunny vanities soon faded. Thick darkness covered all; but as I strove to find thy paths again, how changed they were; at every step more rugged grew the road, more stern the frowning storm. more difficult the thorny path; but still to add to all the bitterness, more crushing grew the daily cross, and more fierce the onsets of the ever-watchful foe. Thus almost ready to give up, my tottering knees gave way! Still, Lord, thou knowest, for thou dost read this heart of mine; the more I stumbled, and the weaker grew my feeble knees, the more I longed to reach that Pilgrim's sweet and precious home, and that dear bosom of eternal rest, of which I caught some transient glimpses, "when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head" (Job xxix. 2.) But now, so long have I been lingering in this valley, that it seems to be a hopeless journey! Turn where I may, a stumbling-block prevents me. All is labour and sorrow. Yet I cannot step up and out of what I am in self, in all my unbelief and misery, and run the way of thy commandments with a disentangled, uncontracted heart!

What can help this bruised reed? The whip? Ah no! is not such a thought among the infinite devices of the good Physician's mind. No. He has cordials to confirm a living hope-precious bandages to bind up such weak and stumbling knees. Where are they found! Behold them in the lively records—in his sacred book of practice he unfolds the mystery of his dealings with such feeble knees. An Abraham could stumble as he stood before Abimelech; a Jacob, after all his prosperity could stumble again and again. A Jeshurun, amidst all his blessings could wax fat and kick. A David, after his wonderful deliverances could faint in his heart, and say, I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. Yea, a Solomon with all his boundless wisdom, wealth, and revelations, could have his vain heart carried away by foreign wives, and prove himself the truth of that sad word, "They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel! [here is the great secret, my brother, 'Get her me, she pleaseth me well,' said Sampson, and dearly he paid for his pleasure! But they lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their souls!"

Nevertheless, cheer up thou bruised one, the smouldering flax has not lost its divine fire. One drop of the "oil of gladness" will put thy soul in a flame yet. Thy dear Physician has watched over

thee in all thy wilderness wanderings. Bitter as are the issues in the feebleness of thy stumbling knees; yet, He hath been thy good Shepherd all the way. He hath not suffered the wolf to pluck away thy life, or pluck thee out of his hand. Yea, He hath not suffered thine image, thy portraiture, to be effaced from the palm of his gracious hand. Although thy steps have been through the mire of fleshly self-will and corruption, yet He is so wonderful in His counsel, that, blindly as thou hast been going on, not one step hast thou taken yet out of the covenant track. In the darkest night, in thy most giddy flights, thy wayward feet have lighted always, through his most precious sovereign grace and tender mercy, in a foot-print of his little flock; so that wherever thou hast strayed, He by the Holy Comforter will open a page in his holy word, and point thee out not only thy path-way but also thy pardon too. It is thus thy Physician gets to himself glory, and by thus dealing with thee, in thy moments of deep sorrow, conquers thy heart, obtains undivided empire in thine affections, brings every thought into sweet captivity and obedience to himself.

" Makes mercy eweet, salvation great, And all his judgments right!"

But mark, my brother, thy Jehovah Jesus in all the glory of his power and love, is this great Friend of thine; He is thy wisdom and prescribes for thee, and his precious remedies are certain and safe. Nevertheless, forget not; He gives not these things into thy keeping; He commits thee to the care of another-we are too apt to lose sight of this sweet point—He has not only given himself for thee, but He has sent thee another Comforter! Couldst thou truly comprehend the blessedness of thy sure mercies, thou wouldest comprehend the wisdom of his dealings with thee, and not be so often in bitterness because thy knees continue to be feeble. It is He that hath weakened thy strength in the way! It is He that hath hedged up thy way with thorns, and made a wall about thee so that thou couldst not step over it with thy feeble knees, nor find THY paths. (Hos. ii. 6.) It is the dear Comforter who hath done all this, to teach thee, and to bring down all thy high thoughts, to prepare thee for a sweet and full manifestation of the Person and glory of Christ. And still in his wisdom, it may be, He will keep thee long in the sick ward, mourning over thy feeble knees. Nevertheless, he will continue his blessed work by carrying out the prescription, by confirming thee in the truth, that the way thou hast been brought, up to this very moment, is a RIGHT WAY; and by reviving thy drooping hope, by showing thee that as thou art in the footsteps of the

flock, thou art truly on the way to the city of habitation; thou shalt yet prove, that it is not the strong, who know not the power of the daily cross and the plague of their own hearts, but it is "the feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God!"

It is thus, dear little-faith, thou shalt learn, that as thou art constrained as one of the Lord's helpless patients, to turn to him with many a groan and bitter complaint; it is his delight thus to give thee a token of his love through the Spirit, to confirm or strengthen thy feeble knees; to show thee, that, if he puts a worm at the root of all thy gourds, it is that when the sun beats upon thine head, thou mayest seek to himself personally as thy protecting shadow. If He causes thee to discover that all things belonging to the flesh is opposed to thy true spiritual interests; it is to show thee, that in Himself thou hast an untouchable righteousness and a never-failing strength. If He suffer thee to fall down with none to help, it is that He may prove to thee, not in theory only, but by deeply felt dependance, that without Him thou canst do nothing. It is by confirming thee in these self-abasing, but Christ-exalting lessons, that the Holy Comforter carries out the purposes of the covenant, "Confirming the feeble knees," proving thereby to the child of God, that the very circumstances which make him feeble, and bring him to nothing in self, are those things which Paul refers to when he says, " For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Let me ask you, my brother, what are those things which are seen that give thee so much anxiety, and so weaken thy strength? Reckon up, if you can, the sum of them, what do they amount to? a few days and nights of sorrow, temptation, and vexation of spirit, because you cannot think, feel, and act as you desire. Paul could not do the thing that he would. But what of that? Did he sit down in inconsolable melancholy? No. He was privileged by the Spirit to look out of self—away from sin—above time. Yes, say you, but then this is the difficult point with me—Paul could look at the unseen things. He had faith given him to do so. True, but mark again, he says that it was while he looked at things invisible; and allow me to add, you are constantly compelled to do the same. But this will appear more simple if we use another word instead of look—which is more literally correct—namely, AIM—our English

word scope comes from the Greek word used here by the apostle. Now what is the scope or the aim of all thy desires, my brother? Do they find their centre in time things? No. "This is not your rest, it is polluted!" But why do they not find their place of repose in time things? Because every thing has been embittered to thee! Because thou art led to feel that all temporals are vanity. The Lord, the Comforter, confirm your feeble knees, and thereby your standing in this dear experience, that all your afflictions, be they what they may, are raising the aim of your soul; and therefore, working out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Behold then again, the good Physician breaketh not the bruised reed, but issues his command to bind it up; and thus He quenches not the smoking flax, but causes the spark of hope to brighten and

spring upwards in desire.

Grace be with you all, amen.

THE BRUISED REED.

(No. 4.)

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."—Matt. xii. 20.

PERHAPS there is no characteristic so familiar to the Lord's dearlyloved family as that which next presents itself for our contemplation, in the chapter to which we have referred in previous lectures; namely, the 35th of Isaiah; "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not!" (verse 4). In the margin it is called " a hasty heart." And truly the heart of a living child of God could not be better described! What so hasty in its conclusions, my brother, like poor Jacob's, when things begin to flow in adverse channels, as thy poor heart, saying, "all these things are against thee?" What so hasty as thy unstable heart, in raising up dark surmisings as to the morrow? True, thou art constrained to set up thine Ebenezer at this moment, that hitherto the Lord hath never failed thee in the hour of peril, or the hour of need! Yet thou canst not take the past as a sure pledge for the future. Yes, I know where thou art looking. I know thine adversary is standing at thy right hand to resist thee; and not being ignorant of his devices, I know what an easy prey thou art to his artifices. If thou hast some easily besetting sin, it becomes to thee as the weak point in thine armour. With what malicious energy will the accuser of the holy brethren thrust his poisoned darts through such an aperture as this, until he makes thee look as black as himself in thine own esteem. and all over as unlikely an one to be a favourite of heaven. And this too, when nothing of the scum of corruption has boiled over perhaps; it is quite enough that it is there, working in hidden restlessness within. Truly, such things as the light of life discovers existing in the fleshly chambers of imagery within, are sufficient to make a child of God of a fearful heart indeed. Nothing but the divine power of that true living faith that purifies the heart, can THE GOSPEL COTTAGE LECTURER, No. 52.

enable a man who lives under a daily sense of "the plague of his own heart," to rise above it, and "Worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh!" (Phil. iii. 3). It must come to this point, my brother, but how hard a lesson is it to learn, that after all our efforts to subdue it, or to improve it, the leopard still remains spotted as ever, and the Ethiopian as black. Nevertheless, we must not rest here. It is out of these discoveries, arises to us the preciousness of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is a good thing to have the mind well established in the doctrines of the Gospel, but this alone is as the school-boy's lessons in navigation. It is when the ship is out of sight of land. when storms come on, opposing winds and currents drive from the direct course, and ports unknown have to be made, that the chart and the compass, and the knowledge how to use them, become as necessaries of life to the sailor. So to the child of God; it is when his fearful heart fails him, and he is driven to his "wits' end." after a long contest with his adversary, who, by his cunning, and by the rapidity of his onsets, has, perhaps, for hours together, kept the poor hasty heart in a state of bewildered excitement, that the true and supreme blessedness of our sovereign, free, complete, and eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, without any reference to what we are. have been, or shall be, after the flesh, shines forth in all its divine splendours; as by the Holy Comforter's sweet power, the hasty heart is calmed by a precious whisper of love and mercy, and the fearful, trembling soul, stayed upon the Lord alone. How delightful are such seasons! Then we learn how good a thing it is to be among the number of those who have spiritually fearful hearts. Then we learn the wisdom of that teaching, which reads, "O, fear the Lord, we his saints: for there is no want to them who fear Him. The young lions do lack—the strong in self shall eternally starve and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Indeed since it is one of the characteristics of God's beloved family to be hasty or fearful hearted. Whatever be the cause of such a condition, it is well to be so, if it were only that we may sweetly experience a measure of that compassion and tenderness which our adorable Physician bestows upon his poor, and need patience in this their hospital dispensation in the valley of Achor.

Moreover, the heart of a child of God may be well named a hasty-heart in another sense—and this is quite consistent with the scope of the text in question. How largely does that physical infirmity, nervousness, prevail among the Lord's people! and what can or does conduce so much as this to hastiness, flutterings, dis-